GEORGIAN POETRY

1916-1917

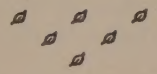
THE POETRY BOOKSHOP

O.B. Schill. 1917
821. G.6.

GEORGIAN POETRY

GEORGIAN POETRY

1916-1917



THE POETRY BOOKSHOP
35 DEVONSHIRE ST. THEOBALDS RD.
LONDON W.C.1
MCMXVII

TO

EDMUND GOSSE

PREFATORY NOTE

THIS third book of *Georgian Poetry* carries to the end of a seventh year the presentation of chosen examples from the work of contemporary poets belonging to the younger generation. Of the eighteen writers included, nine appear in the series for the first time. The representation of the older inhabitants has in most cases been restricted in order to allow full space for the newcomers; and the alphabetical order of the names has been reversed, so as to bring more of these into prominence than would otherwise have been done.

My thanks for permission to print the poems are due to Messrs. Chatto & Windus, Constable, Fifield, Heinemann, Macmillan, Elkin Mathews, Martin Secker, and Sidgwick & Jackson, and to the Editors of the *Nation*, the *New Statesman*, and *To-Day*.

E. M.

September 1917.

CONTENTS

W. J. TURNER

Romance (from 'The Hunter') 3
Ecstasy „ „ 5
Magic „ „ 7
The Hunter „ „ 9
The Sky-sent Death „ 11
The Caves of Auvergne 13

JAMES STEPHENS

The Fifteen Acres (from 'The Adventures of Seumas Beg') 17
Check „ „ „ 19
Westland Row „ „ „ 20
The Turn of the Road „ „ 21
A Visit from Abroad „ „ 22

J. C. SQUIRE

A House (from 'The Lily of Malud') 25
To a Bull-dog „ „ „ 27
The Lily of Malud „ „ „ 30

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

A Letter Home (from 'The Old Huntsman') 39
The Kiss „ „ „ 42
The Dragon and the Undying „ 43
To Victory „ 44
'They' „ 45
'In the Pink' „ 46
Haunted „ 47
The Death-Bed „ 49

I. ROSENBERG

'Ah, Koelue . . . 53

ROBERT NICHOLS

To—— (from 'Ardours and Endurances') 57
The Assault „ „ „ 58
Fulfilment „ „ „ 62
The Philosopher's Oration „ 63
The Naiads' Music „ „ 66
The Prophetic Bard's Oration „ 68
The Tower „ 71

HAROLD MONRO

Two Poems (from 'Strange Meetings') 77
Every Thing „ „ „ 78
Solitude „ „ „ 81
Week-end „ „ „ 82
The Bird at Dawn „ „ 87

JOHN MASEFIELD

Seven Poems (from 'Lollingdon Downs') 91

RALPH HODGSON

The Gipsy Girl (from 'Poems') 97
The Bells of Heaven „ 98
Babylon „ 99

ROBERT GRAVES

It's a Queer Time (from 'Over the Brazier') 103
David and Goliath (from 'Fairies and Fusiliers') 105
A Pinch of Salt „ „ 107
Star Talk (from 'Over the Brazier') 108
In the Wilderness „ „ 110
The Boy in Church (from 'Fairies and Fusiliers') 111
The Lady Visitor „ „ „ 113
Not Dead „ „ „ 114

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

Rupert Brooke (from 'Friends') 117
Tenants „ „ 118
For G. „ „ 119
Sea-Change „ „ 120
Battle (from 'Battle'): 121
I. The Return
II. The Dancers
III. Hit
Lament (from 'Whin') 123

JOHN FREEMAN

Music Comes (from 'Stone Trees') 127
November Skies „ „ „ 129
Discovery „ „ „ 130
'It was the Lovely Moon' „ 131
Stone Trees „ 132
The Pigeons (published in *To-Day*) 134
Happy is England Now (from 'Stone Trees') 138

JOHN DRINKWATER
May Garden (from 'Tides') 141
The Midlands „ „ 142
The Cotswold Farmers „ 144
Reciprocity „ 145
Birthright (from 'Olton Pools') 146
Olton Pools „ „ „ 147

WALTER DE LA MARE
The Scribe (from 'Poems') 151
The Remonstrance „ 152
The Ghost „ 153
The Fool rings his Bells „ 154

WILLIAM H. DAVIES
The White Cascade (from 'Child Lovers') 159
Easter 160
Raptures 161
Cowslips and Larks 162

GORDON BOTTOMLEY
Atlantis (from 'An Annual of New Poetry, 1917') 165
New Year's Eve, 1913 „ „ 166
In Memoriam, A. M. W. „ „ 168

MAURICE BARING
In Memoriam, A. H. 171

HERBERT ASQUITH
The Volunteer 181

BIBLIOGRAPHY 183

W. J. TURNER

ROMANCE

W. J. Turner

When I was but thirteen or so
I went into a golden land,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Took me by the hand.

My father died, my brother too,
They passed like fleeting dreams,
I stood where Popocatapetl
In the sunlight gleams.

I dimly heard the master's voice
And boys far-off at play,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had stolen me away.

I walked in a great golden dream
To and fro from school—
Shining Popocatapetl
The dusty streets did rule.

I walked home with a gold dark boy
And never a word I'd say,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had taken my speech away:

I gazed entranced upon his face
Fairer than any flower—
O shining Popocatapetl
It was thy magic hour:

W. J.
Turner

The houses, people, traffic seemed
  Thin fading dreams by day,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
  They had stolen my soul away!

ECSTASY

W. J. Turner

I saw a frieze on whitest marble drawn
Of boys who sought for shells along the shore,
Their white feet shedding pallor in the sea,
The shallow sea, the spring-time sea of green
That faintly creamed against the cold, smooth
pebbles.

The air was thin, their limbs were delicate,
The wind had graven their small eager hands
To feel the forests and the dark nights of Asia
Behind the purple bloom of the horizon,
Where sails would float and slowly melt away.

Their naked, pure, and grave, unbroken silence
Filled the soft air as gleaming, limpid water
Fills a spring sky those days when rain is lying
In shattered bright pools on the wind-dried roads,
And their sweet bodies were wind-purified.

One held a shell unto his shell-like ear
And there was music carven in his face,
His eyes half-closed, his lips just breaking open
To catch the lulling, mazy, coralline roar
Of numberless caverns filled with singing seas.

And all of them were hearkening as to singing
Of far-off voices thin and delicate,
Voices too fine for any mortal wind
To blow into the whorls of mortal ears—
And yet those sounds flowed from their grave,
sweet faces.

W. J. Turner

And as I looked I heard that delicate music,
And I became as grave, as calm, as still
As those carved boys. I stood upon that shore,
I felt the cool sea dream around my feet,
My eyes were staring at the far horizon :

And the wind came and purified my limbs,
And the stars came and set within my eyes,
And snowy clouds rested upon my shoulders,
And the blue sky shimmered deep within me,
And I sang like a carven pipe of music.

MAGIC

W. J. Turner

I love a still conservatory
That's full of giant, breathless palms,
Azaleas, clematis and vines,
Whose quietness great Trees becalms
Filling the air with foliage,
A curved and dreamy statuary.

I like to hear a cold, pure rill
Of water trickling low, afar
With sudden little jerks and purls
Into a tank or stoneware jar,
The song of a tiny sleeping bird
Held like a shadow in its trill.

I love the mossy quietness
That grows upon the great stone flags,
The dark tree-ferns, the staghorn ferns,
The prehistoric, antlered stags
That carven stand and stare among
The silent, ferny wilderness.

And are they birds or souls that flit
Among the trees so silently,
And are they fish or ghosts that haunt
The still pools of the rockery!—
For I am but a sculptured rock
As in that magic place I sit.

Still as a great jewel is the air
With boughs and leaves smooth-carved in it,
And rocks and trees and giant ferns,
And blooms with inner radiance lit,
And naked water like a nymph
That dances tireless slim and bare.

W. J. Turner

I watch a white Nyanza float
Upon a green, untroubled pool,
A fairyland Ophelia, she
Has cast herself in water cool,
And lies while fairy cymbals ring
Drowned in her fairy castle moat.

The goldfish sing a winding song
Below her pale and waxen face,
The water-nymph is dancing by
Lifting smooth arms with mournful grace,
A stainless white dream she floats on
While fairies beat a fairy gong.

Silent the Cattleyas blaze
And thin red orchid shapes of Death
Peer savagely with twisted lips
Sucking an eerie, phantom breath
With that bright, spotted, fever'd lust
That watches lonely travellers craze.

Gigantic, mauve and hairy leaves
Hang like obliterated faces
Full of dim unattained expression
Such as haunts virgin forest places
When Silence leaps among the trees
And the echoing heart deceives.

THE HUNTER

W. J. Turner

"But there was one land he dared not enter."

Beyond the blue, the purple seas,
Beyond the thin horizon's line,
Beyond Antilla, Hebrides,
Jamaica, Cuba, Caribbees,
There lies the land of Yucatan.

The land, the land of Yucatan,
The low coast breaking into foam,
The dim hills where my thoughts shall roam
The forests of my boyhood's home,
The splendid dream of Yucatan!

I met thee first long, long ago
Turning a printed page, and I
Stared at a world I did not know
And felt my blood like fire flow
At that strange name of Yucatan.

O those sweet, far-off Austral days
When life had a diviner glow,
When hot Suns whipped my blood to know
Things all unseen, then I could go
Into thy heart O Yucatan!

I have forgotten what I saw,
I have forgotten what I knew,
And many lands I've set sail for
To find that marvellous spell of yore,
Never to set foot on thy shore
O haunting land of Yucatan!

W. J. Turner

But sailing I have passed thee by,
And leaning on the white ship's rail
Watched thy dim hills till mystery
Wrapped thy far stillness close to me
And I have breathed ''tis Yucatan!

''Tis Yucatan, 'tis Yucatan!'
The ship is sailing far away,
The coast recedes, the dim hills fade,
A bubble-winding track we've made,
And thou'rt a Dream O Yucatan!

THE SKY-SENT DEATH

W. J. Turner

"A German aeroplane flew over Greek territory dropping a bomb which killed a shepherd."

Sitting on a stone a Shepherd,
Stone and Shepherd sleeping,
Under the high blue Attic sky;
Along the green monotony
Grey sheep creeping, creeping.

Deep down on the hill and valley,
At the bottom of the sunshine,
Like great Ships in clearest water,
Water holding anchored Shadows,
Water without wave or ripple,
Sunshine deep and clear and heavy,
Sunshine like a booming bell
Made of purest golden metal,
White Ships heavy in the sky
Sleep with anchored shadow.

Pipe a song in that still air
  And the song would be of crystal
Snapped in silence, or a bronze vase
  Smooth and graceful, curved and shining.
Tell an old tale or a history;
  It would seem a slow Procession
Full of gestures; limbs and torso
  White and rounded in the sunlight.

Sitting on a stone a Shepherd,
Stone and Shepherd sleeping,
Like a fragment of old marble
Dug up from the hillside shadow.

W. J. Turner

In the sunshine deep and soundless
Came a faint metallic humming;
In the sunshine clear and heavy
Came a speck, a speck of shadow—
Shepherd lift your head and listen,
Listen to that humming Shadow!

Sitting on a stone the Shepherd,
Stone and Shepherd sleeping
In a sleep dreamless as water,
Water in a white glass beaker,
Clear, pellucid, without shadow;
Underneath a sky-blue crystal
Sees his grey sheep creeping.

In the sunshine clear and heavy
Shadow-fled a dark hand downward:
In the sunshine deep and soundless
Burst a star-dropt thing of thunder—
Smoked the burnt blue air's torn veiling
Drooping softly round the hillside.

Boomed the silence in returning
To the crater in the hillside,
To the red earth fresh and bleeding,
To the mangled heap remaining:
Far away that humming Shadow
Vanished in the azure distance.

Sitting on a stone no Shepherd,
Stone and Shepherd sleeping,
But across the hill and valley
Grey sheep creeping, creeping,
Standing carven on the sky-line,
Scattering in the open distance,
Free, in no man's keeping.

THE CAVES OF AUVERGNE

W. J. Turner

He carved the red deer and the bull
  Upon the smooth cave rock,
Returned from war with belly full,
  And scarred with many a knock,
He carved the red deer and the bull
  Upon the smooth cave rock.

The stars flew by the cave's wide door,
  The clouds wild trumpets blew,
Trees rose in wild dreams from the floor,
  Flowers with dream faces grew
Up to the sky, and softly hung
  Golden and white and blue.

The woman ground her heap of corn,
  Her heart a guarded fire;
The wind played in his trembling soul
  Like a hand upon a lyre,
The wind drew faintly on the stone
  Symbols of his desire:

The red deer of the forest dark,
  Whose antlers cut the sky,
That vanishes into the mirk
  And like a dream flits by,
And by an arrow slain at last
  Is but the wind's dark body.

The bull that stands in marshy lakes
  As motionless and still
As a dark rock jutting from a plain
  Without a tree or hill;
The bull that is the sign of life,
  Its sombre, phallic will.

W. J. Turner

And from the dead, white eyes of them
  The wind springs up anew,
It blows upon the trembling heart,
  And bull and deer renew
Their flitting life in the dim past
  When that dead Hunter drew.

I sit beside him in the night,
  And, fingering his red stone,
I chase through endless forests dark
  Seeking that thing unknown,
That which is not red deer or bull,
  But which by them was shown:

By those stiff shapes in which he drew
  His soul's exalted cry,
When flying down the forest dark
  He slew and knew not why,
When he was filled with song, and strength
  Flowed to him from the sky.

The wind blows from red deer and bull,
  The clouds wild trumpets blare,
Trees rise in wild dreams from the earth,
  Flowers with dream faces stare,
O Hunter, your own shadow stands
  Within your forest lair!

JAMES STEPHENS

THE FIFTEEN ACRES

James Stephens

I cling and swing
On a branch, or sing
Through the cool, clear hush of
Morning, O:
Or fling my wing
On the air, and bring
To sleepier birds a warning, O:
That the night's in flight,
And the sun's in sight,
And the dew is the grass adorning, O:
And the green leaves swing
As I sing, sing, sing,
Up by the river,
Down the dell,
To the little wee nest,
Where the big tree fell,
So early in the morning, O.

I flit and twit
In the sun for a bit
When his light so bright is shining, O:
Or sit and fit
My plumes, or knit
Straw plaits for the nest's nice lining, O:
And she with glee
Shows unto me
Underneath her wings reclining, O:
And I sing that Peg
Has an egg, egg, egg,
Up by the oat-field,
Round the mill,
Past the meadow,
Down the hill,
So early in the morning, O.

James Stephens

I stoop and swoop
On the air, or loop
Through the trees, and then go soaring, O:
To group with a troop
On the gusty poop
While the wind behind is roaring, O:
I skim and swim
By a cloud's red rim
And up to the azure flooring, O:
And my wide wings drip
As I slip, slip, slip
Down through the rain-drops,
Back where Peg
Broods in the nest
On the little white egg,
So early in the morning, O.

CHECK

James Stephens

The night was creeping on the ground ;
She crept and did not make a sound
Until she reached the tree, and then
She covered it, and stole again
Along the grass beside the wall.

I heard the rustle of her shawl
As she threw blackness everywhere
Upon the sky and ground and air,
And in the room where I was hid :
But no matter what she did
To everything that was without,
She could not put my candle out.

So I stared at the night, and she
Stared back solemnly at me.

James
Stephens

WESTLAND ROW

Every Sunday there's a throng
Of pretty girls, who trot along
In a pious, breathless state
(They are nearly always late)
To the Chapel, where they pray
For the sins of Saturday.

They have frocks of white and blue,
Yellow sashes they have too,
And red ribbons show each head
Tenderly is ringleted ;
And the bell rings loud, and the
Railway whistles urgently.

After Chapel they will go,
Walking delicately slow,
Telling still how Father John
Is so good to look upon,
And such other grave affairs
As they thought of during prayers.

THE TURN OF THE ROAD

James Stephens

I was playing with my hoop along the road
Just where the bushes are, when, suddenly,
There came a shout,—I ran away and stowed
Myself beneath a bush, and watched to see
What made the noise, and then, around the bend,
I saw a woman running. She was old
And wrinkle-faced, and had big teeth.—The end
Of her red shawl caught on a bush and rolled
Right off her, and her hair fell down.—Her face
Was awful white, and both her eyes looked sick,
And she was talking queer. '*O God of Grace!*'
Said she, '*where is the child?*' and flew back quick
The way she came, and screamed, and shook her hands;
. . . Maybe she was a witch from foreign lands.

James Stephens

A VISIT FROM ABROAD

A speck went blowing up against the sky
  As little as a leaf: then it drew near
And broadened.—'It's a bird,' said I,
  And fetched my bow and arrows. It was queer!
It grew from up a speck into a blot,
And squattered past a cloud; then it flew down
All crumply, and waggled such a lot
  I thought the thing would fall.—It was a brown
Old carpet where a man was sitting snug
  Who, when he reached the ground, began to sew
A big hole in the middle of the rug,
  And kept on peeping everywhere to know
Who might be coming—then he gave a twist
  And flew away. . . . I fired at him but missed.

J C. SQUIRE

A HOUSE

J. C. Squire

Now very quietly, and rather mournfully,
In clouds of hyacinth the sun retires,
And all the stubble-fields that were so warm to him
Keep but in memory their borrowed fires.

And I, the traveller, break, still unsatisfied,
From that faint exquisite celestial strand,
And turn and see again the only dwelling-place
In this wide wilderness of darkening land.

The house, that house, O now what change has come to it.
Its crude red-brick façade, its roof of slate;
What imperceptible swift hand has given it
A new, a wonderful, a queenly state?

No hand has altered it, that parallelogram,
So inharmonious, so ill-arranged;
That hard blue roof in shape and colour's what it was;
No, it is not that any line has changed.

Only that loneliness is now accentuate
And, as the dusk unveils the heaven's deep cave,
This small world's feebleness fills me with awe again,
And all man's energies seem very brave.

And this mean edifice, which some dull architect
Built for an ignorant earth-turning hind,
Takes on the quality of that magnificent
Unshakable dauntlessness of human kind.

J. C. Squire

Darkness and stars will come, and long the night will be,
Yet imperturbable that house will rest,
Avoiding gallantly the stars' chill scrutiny,
Ignoring secrets in the midnight's breast.

Thunders may shudder it, and winds demoniac
May howl their menaces, and hail descend ;
Yet it will bear with them, serenely, steadfastly,
Not even scornfully, and wait the end.

And all a universe of nameless messengers
From unknown distances may whisper fear,
And it will imitate immortal permanence,
And stare and stare ahead and scarcely hear.

It stood there yesterday ; it will to-morrow, too,
When there is none to watch, no alien eyes
To watch its ugliness assume a majesty
From this great solitude of evening skies.

So lone, so very small, with worlds and worlds around,
While life remains to it prepared to outface
Whatever awful unconjectured mysteries
May hide and wait for it in time and space.

TO A BULL-DOG

J. C. Squire

(W. H. S., Capt. [Acting Major] R.F.A.; killed April 12, 1917)

We shan't see Willy any more, Mamie,
He won't be coming any more:
He came back once and again and again,
But he won't get leave any more.

We looked from the window and there was his cab,
And we ran downstairs like a streak,
And he said, 'Hullo, you bad dog,' and you crouched to the floor,
Paralysed to hear him speak,

And then let fly at his face and his chest
Till I had to hold you down,
While he took off his cap and his gloves and his coat,
And his bag and his thonged Sam Browne.

We went upstairs to the studio,
The three of us, just as of old,
And you lay down and I sat and talked to him
As round the room he strolled.

Here in the room where, years ago
Before the old life stopped,
He worked all day with his slippers and his pipe,
He would pick up the threads he'd dropped,

Fondling all the drawings he had left behind,
Glad to find them all still the same,
And opening the cupboards to look at his belongings
. . . Every time he came.

J. C. Squire

But now I know what a dog doesn't know,
Though you'll thrust your head on my knee,
And try to draw me from the absent-mindedness
That you find so dull in me.

And all your life you will never know
What I wouldn't tell you even if I could,
That the last time we waved him away
Willy went for good.

But sometimes as you lie on the hearthrug
Sleeping in the warmth of the stove,
Even through your muddled old canine brain
Shapes from the past may rove.

You'll scarcely remember, even in a dream,
How we brought home a silly little pup,
With a big square head and little crooked legs
That could scarcely bear him up,

But your tail will tap at the memory
Of a man whose friend you were,
Who was always kind though he called you a naughty dog
When he found you on his chair;

Who'd make you face a reproving finger
And solemnly lecture you
Till your head hung downwards and you looked very sheepish:
And you'll dream of your triumphs too,

Of summer evening chases in the garden
When you dodged us all about with a bone:
We were three boys, and you were the cleverest,
But now we're two alone.

When summer comes again,
  And the long sunsets fade,
We shall have to go on playing the feeble game for two
  That since the war we've played.

And though you run expectant as you always do
  To the uniforms we meet,
You'll never find Willy among all the soldiers
  In even the longest street,

Nor in any crowd ; yet, strange and bitter thought,
  Even now were the old words said,
If I tried the old trick and said 'Where's Willy ?'
  You would quiver and lift your head,

And your brown eyes would look to ask if I was serious,
  And wait for the word to spring.
Sleep undisturbed : I shan't say *that* again,
  You innocent old thing.

I must sit, not speaking, on the sofa,
  While you lie asleep on the floor ;
For he's suffered a thing that dogs couldn't dream of,
  And he won't be coming here any more.

J. C. Squire

J. C. Squire

THE LILY OF MALUD

The lily of Malud is born in secret mud.
It is breathed like a word in a little dark ravine
Where no bird was ever heard and no beast was ever seen,
And the leaves are never stirred by the panther's velvet sheen.

It blooms once a year in summer moonlight,
In a valley of dark fear full of pale moonlight:
It blooms once a year, and dies in a night,
And its petals disappear with the dawn's first light;
And when that night has come, black small-breasted maids,
With ecstatic terror dumb, steal fawn-like through the shades
To watch, hour by hour, the unfolding of the flower.

When the world is full of night, and the moon reigns alone
And drowns in silver light the known and the unknown,
When each hut is a mound, half blue-silver and half black,
And casts upon the ground the hard shadow of its back,
When the winds are out of hearing and the tree-tops never shake,
When the grass in the clearing is silent but awake
'Neath a moon-paven sky: all the village is asleep
And the babes that nightly cry dream deep:

From the doors the maidens creep,
Tiptoe over dreaming curs, soft, so soft, that not one stirs,
And stand curved and a-quiver, like bathers by a river,
Looking at the forest wall, groups of slender naked girls,
Whose black bodies shine like pearls where the moonbeams fall.

They have waked, they knew not why, at a summons from the night,
They have stolen fearfully from the dark to the light,
Stepping over sleeping men, who have moved and slept again:
And they know not why they go to the forest, but they know,
As their moth-feet pass to the shore of the grass
And the forest's dreadful brink, that their tender spirits shrink:
They would flee, but cannot turn, for their eyelids burn
With still frenzy, and each maid, ere she leaves the moonlit space,
If she sees another's face is thrilled and afraid.

Now like little phantom fawns they thread the outer lawns
Where the boles of giant trees stand about in twos and threes,
Till the forest grows more dense and the darkness more intense,

J. C. Squire

And they only sometimes see in a lone moon-ray
A dead and spongy trunk in the earth half-sunk,
Or the roots of a tree with fungus grey,
Or a drift of muddy leaves, or a banded snake that heaves.

And the towering unseen roof grows more intricate, and soon
It is featureless and proof to the lost forgotten moon.
But they could not look above as with blind-drawn feet they move
Onwards on the scarce-felt path, with quick and desperate breath,
For their circling fingers dread to caress some slimy head,
Or to touch the icy shape of a hunched and hairy ape,
And at every step they fear in their very midst to hear
A lion's rending roar or a tiger's snore. . . .
And when things swish or fall, they shiver but dare not call.

O what is it leads the way that they do not stray?
What unimagined arm keeps their bodies from harm?
What presence concealed lifts their little feet that yield
Over dry ground and wet till their straining eyes are met
With a thinning of the darkness?

And the foremost faintly cries in awed surprise :
And they one by one emerge from the gloom to the verge
Of a small sunken vale full of moonlight pale.
And they hang along the bank, clinging to the branches dank,
A shadowy festoon out of sight of the moon ;
And they see in front of them, rising from the mud,
A single straight stem and a single pallid bud
In that little lake of light from the moon's calm height.

A stem, a ghostly bud, on the moon-swept mud
That shimmers like a pond ; and over there beyond
The guardian forest high, menacing and strange,
Invades the empty sky with its wild black range.

And they watch hour by hour that small lonely flower
In that deep forest place that hunter never found.

It shines without sound, as a star in space.

And the silence all around that solitary place
Is like silence in a dream ; till a sudden flashing gleam
Down their dark faces flies ; and their lips fall apart
And their glimmering great eyes with excitement dart
And their fingers, clutching the branches they were touching,
Shake and arouse hissing leaves on the boughs.

J. C. Squire

And they whisper aswoon: Did it move in the moon?

O it moved as it grew!
It is moving, opening, with calm and gradual will
And their bodies where they cling are shadowed and still,
And with marvel they mark that the mud now is dark,
For the unfolding flower, like a goddess in her power,
Challenges the moon with a light of her own,
That lovelily grows as the petals unclose,
Wider, more wide with an awful inward pride
Till the heart of it breaks, and stilled is their breath,
For the radiance it makes is as wonderful as death.

The morning's crimson stain tinges their ashen brows
As they part the last boughs and slowly step again
On to the village grass, and chill and languid pass
Into the huts to sleep.
Brief slumber, yet so deep
That, when they wake to day, darkness and splendour seem
Broken and far-away, a faint miraculous dream;
And when those maidens rise they are as they ever were
Save only for a rare shade of trouble in their eyes.
And the surly thick-lipped men, as they sit about their huts
Making drums out of guts, grunting gruffly now and then,

Carving sticks of ivory, stretching shields of wrinkled skin, J. C. Squire
Smoothing sinister and thin squatting gods of ebony,
Chip and grunt and do not see.
But each mother, silently,
Longer than her wont stays shut in the dimness of her hut,
For she feels a brooding cloud of memory in the air,
A lingering thing there that makes her sit bowed
With hollow shining eyes, as the night-fire dies,
And stare softly at the ember, and try to remember,
Something sorrowful and far, something sweet and vaguely seen
Like an early evening star when the sky is pale green :
A quiet silver tower that climbed in an hour,
Or a ghost like a flower, or a flower like a queen :
Something holy in the past that came and did not last. . . .
But she knows not what it was.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

A LETTER HOME

(To Robert Graves)

Siegfried Sassoon

I

Here I'm sitting in the gloom
Of my quiet attic room.
France goes rolling all around,
Fledged with forest May has crowned.
And I puff my pipe, calm-hearted,
Thinking how the fighting started,
Wondering when we'll ever end it,
Back to Hell with Kaiser send it,
Gag the noise, pack up and go,
Clockwork soldiers in a row.
I've got better things to do
Than to waste my time on you.

II

Robert, when I drowse to-night,
Skirting lawns of sleep to chase
Shifting dreams in mazy light,
Somewhere then I'll see your face
Turning back to bid me follow
Where I wag my arms and hollo,
Over hedges hasting after
Crooked smile and baffling laughter,
Running tireless, floating, leaping,
Down your web-hung woods and valleys,
Garden glooms and hornbeam alleys,
Where the glowworm stars are peeping,
Till I find you, quiet as stone
On a hill-top all alone,
Staring outward, gravely pondering
Jumbled leagues of hillock-wandering.

III

You and I have walked together
In the starving winter weather.
We've been glad because we knew
Time's too short and friends are few.
We've been sad because we missed
One whose yellow head was kissed
By the gods, who thought about him
Till they couldn't do without him.
Now he's here again ; I've seen
Soldier David dressed in green,
Standing in a wood that swings
To the madrigal he sings.
He's come back, all mirth and glory,
Like the prince in a fairy story.
Winter called him far away ;
Blossoms bring him home with May.

IV

Well, I know you'll swear it's true
That you found him decked in blue
Striding up through morning-land
With a cloud on either hand.
Out in Wales, you'll say, he marches
Arm-in-arm with oaks and larches ;
Hides all night in hilly nooks,
Laughs at dawn in tumbling brooks.
Yet, it's certain, here he teaches
Outpost-schemes to groups of beeches.
And I'm sure, as here I stand,
That he shines through every land,
That he sings in every place
Where we're thinking of his face.

Siegfried Sassoon

Robert, there's a war in France;
Everywhere men bang and blunder,
Sweat and swear and worship Chance,
Creep and blink through cannon thunder.
Rifles crack and bullets flick,
Sing and hum like hornet-swarms.
Bones are smashed and buried quick.
Yet, through stunning battle storms,
All the while I watch the spark
Lit to guide me; for I know
Dreams will triumph, though the dark
Scowls above me where I go.
You can hear me; *you* can mingle
Radiant folly with my jingle.
War's a joke for me and you
While we know such dreams are true!

THE KISS

To these I turn, in these I trust;
Brother Lead and Sister Steel.
To his blind power I make appeal;
I guard her beauty clean from rust.

He spins and burns and loves the air,
And splits a skull to win my praise;
But up the nobly marching days
She glitters naked, cold and fair.

Sweet Sister, grant your soldier this;
That in good fury he may feel
The body where he sets his heel
Quail from your downward darting kiss.

THE DRAGON AND THE UNDYING

Siegfried Sassoon

All night the flares go up ; the Dragon sings
And beats upon the dark with furious wings ;
And, stung to rage by his own darting fires,
Reaches with grappling coils from town to town ;
He lusts to break the loveliness of spires,
And hurls their martyred music toppling down.

Yet, though the slain are homeless as the breeze,
Vocal are they, like storm-bewilder'd seas.
Their faces are the fair, unshrouded night,
And planets are their eyes, their ageless dreams.
Tenderly stooping earthward from their height,
They wander in the dusk with chanting streams ;
And they are dawn-lit trees, with arms up-flung,
To hail the burning heavens they left unsung.

Siegfried Sassoon

TO VICTORY

Return to greet me, colours that were my joy,
Not in the woeful crimson of men slain,
But shining as a garden ; come with the streaming
Banners of dawn and sundown after rain.

I want to fill my gaze with blue and silver,
Radiance through living roses, spires of green
Rising in young-limbed copse and lovely wood,
Where the hueless wind passes and cries unseen.

I am not sad ; only I long for lustre,—
Tired of the greys and browns and the leafless ash.
I would have hours that move like a glitter of dancers
Far from the angry guns that boom and flash.

Return, musical, gay with blossom and fleetness,
Days when my sight shall be clear and my heart rejoice ;
Come from the sea with breadth of approaching brightness,
When the blithe wind laughs on the hills with uplifted voice.

'THEY'

Siegfried Sassoon

The Bishop tells us: 'When the boys come back
They will not be the same; for they'll have fought
In a just cause: they lead the last attack
On Anti-Christ; their comrades' blood has bought
New right to breed an honourable race.
They have challenged Death and dared him face to face.'

'We're none of us the same!' the boys reply.
For George lost both his legs; and Bill's stone blind;
Poor Jim's shot through the lungs and like to die;
And Bert's gone syphilitic; you'll not find
A chap who's served that hasn't found *some* change.'
And the Bishop said: 'The ways of God are strange!'

Siegfried Sassoon

'IN THE PINK'

So Davies wrote: 'This leaves me in the pink.'
Then scrawled his name: 'Your loving sweetheart, Willie'
With crosses for a hug. He'd had a drink
Of rum and tea; and, though the barn was chilly,
For once his blood ran warm; he had pay to spend.
Winter was passing; soon the year would mend.

He couldn't sleep that night. Stiff in the dark
He groaned and thought of Sundays at the farm,
When he'd go out as cheerful as a lark
In his best suit to wander arm-in-arm
With brown-eyed Gwen, and whisper in her ear
The simple, silly things she liked to hear.

And then he thought: to-morrow night we trudge
Up to the trenches, and my boots are rotten.
Five miles of stodgy clay and freezing sludge,
And everything but wretchedness forgotten.
To-night he's in the pink; but soon he'll die.
And still the war goes on; *he* don't know why.

HAUNTED

Siegfried Sassoon

Evening was in the wood, louring with storm.
A time of drought had sucked the weedy pool
And baked the channels; birds had done with song.
Thirst was a dream of fountains in the moon,
Or willow-music blown across the water
Leisurely sliding on by weir and mill.

Uneasy was the man who wandered, brooding,
His face a little whiter than the dusk.
A drone of sultry wings flicker'd in his head.

The end of sunset burning thro' the boughs
Died in a smear of red; exhausted hours
Cumber'd, and ugly sorrows hemmed him in.

He thought: 'Somewhere there's thunder,' as he strove
To shake off dread; he dared not look behind him,
But stood, the sweat of horror on his face.

He blundered down a path, trampling on thistles,
In sudden race to leave the ghostly trees.
And: 'Soon I'll be in open fields,' he thought,
And half remembered starlight on the meadows,
Scent of mown grass and voices of tired men,
Fading along the field-paths; home and sleep
And cool-swept upland spaces, whispering leaves,
And far off the long churring night-jar's note.

Siegfried Sassoon

But something in the wood, trying to daunt him,
Led him confused in circles through the brake.
He was forgetting his old wretched folly,
And freedom was his need ; his throat was choking ;
Barbed brambles gripped and clawed him round his legs,
And he floundered over snags and hidden stumps.
Mumbling : ' I will get out ! I must get out ! '
Butting and thrusting up the baffling gloom,
Pausing to listen in a space 'twixt thorns,
He peers around with boding, frantic eyes.
An evil creature in the twilight looping
Flapped blindly in his face. Beating it off,
He screeched in terror, and straightway something clambered
Heavily from an oak, and dropped, bent double,
To shamble at him zigzag, squat and bestial.

Headlong he charges down the wood, and falls
With roaring brain—agony—the snapt spark—
And blots of green and purple in his eyes.
Then the slow fingers groping on his neck,
And at his heart the strangling clasp of death.

THE DEATH-BED

Siegfried Sassoon

He drowsed and was aware of silence heaped
Round him, unshaken as the steadfast walls;
Aqueous like floating rays of amber light,
Soaring and quivering in the wings of sleep,—
Silence and safety; and his mortal shore
Lipped by the inward, moonless waves of death.

Some one was holding water to his mouth.
He swallowed, unresisting; moaned and dropped
Through crimson gloom to darkness; and forgot
The opiate throb and ache that was his wound.
Water—calm, sliding green above the weir;
Water—a sky-lit alley for his boat,
Bird-voiced, and bordered with reflected flowers
And shaken hues of summer: drifting down,
He dipped contented oars, and sighed, and slept.

Night, with a gust of wind, was in the ward,
Blowing the curtain to a glimmering curve.
Night. He was blind; he could not see the stars
Glinting among the wraiths of wandering cloud;
Queer blots of colour, purple, scarlet, green,
Flickered and faded in his drowning eyes.

Rain; he could hear it rustling through the dark;
Fragrance and passionless music woven as one;
Warm rain on drooping roses; pattering showers
That soak the woods; not the harsh rain that sweeps
Behind the thunder, but a trickling peace
Gently and slowly washing life away.

. . . . .

Siegfried Sassoon

He stirred, shifting his body ; then the pain
Leaped like a prowling beast, and gripped and tore
His groping dreams with grinding claws and fangs.
But some one was beside him ; soon he lay
Shuddering because that evil thing had passed.
And Death, who'd stepped toward him, paused and
stared.

Light many lamps and gather round his bed.
Lend him your eyes, warm blood, and will to live.
Speak to him ; rouse him ; you may save him yet.
He's young ; he hated war ; how should he die
When cruel old campaigners win safe through ?

But Death replied : ' I choose him.' So he went,
And there was silence in the summer night ;
Silence and safety ; and the veils of sleep.
Then, far away, the thudding of the guns.

I. ROSENBERG

'AH, KOELUE . . .'

I. Rosenberg

Ah, Koelue!
Had you embalmed your beauty, so
It could not backward go,
Or change in any way,
What were the use, if on my eyes
The embalming spices were not laid
To keep us fixed,
Two amorous sculptures passioned endlessly?
What were the use, if my sight grew,
And its far branches were cloud-hung,
You small at the roots, like grass,
While the new lips my spirit would kiss
Were not red lips of flesh,
But the huge kiss of power?
Where yesterday soft hair through my fingers fell,
A shaggy mane would entwine,
And no slim form work fire to my thighs,
But human Life's inarticulate mass
Throb the pulse of a thing
Whose mountain flanks awry
Beg my mastery—mine!
Ah! I will ride the dizzy beast of the world
My road—my way!

ROBERT NICHOLS

TO——

Robert Nichols

Asleep within the deadest hour of night
And turning with the earth, I was aware
How suddenly the eastern curve was bright,
As when the sun arises from his lair.
But not the sun arose: it was thy hair
Shaken up heaven in tossing leagues of light.

Since then I know that neither night nor day
May I escape thee, O my heavenly hell!
Awake, in dreams, thou springest to waylay;
And should I dare to die, I know full well
Whose voice would mock me in the mourning bell,
Whose face would greet me in hell's fiery way.

Robert Nichols

THE ASSAULT

The beating of the guns grows louder.
'*Not long, boys, now.*'
My heart burns whiter, fearfuller, prouder.
Hurricanes grow
As guns redouble their fire.
Through the shaken periscope peeping,
I glimpse their wire:
Black earth, fountains of earth rise, leaping,
Spouting like shocks of meeting waves,
Death's fountains are playing,
Shells like shrieking birds rush over;
Crash and din rises higher.
A stream of lead raves
Over us from the left . . . (we safe under cover!)
Crash! Reverberation! Crash!
Acrid smoke billowing. Flash upon flash.
Black smoke drifting. The German line
Vanishes in confusion, smoke. Cries, and cry
Of our men, '*Gah, yer swine!*
Ye're for it,' die
In a hurricane of shell.

One cry:
'*We're comin' soon! look out!*'
There is opened hell
Over there; fragments fly,
Rifles and bits of men whirled at the sky:
Dust, smoke, thunder! A sudden bout
Of machine guns chattering . . .
And redoubled battering,
As if in fury at their daring! . . .

No good staring.

Time soon now . . . home . . . house on a sunny hill . . . Robert Nichols
Gone like a flickered page:
Time soon now . . . zero . . . will engage. . . .

A sudden thrill—
'Fix bayonets!'
Gods! we have our fill
Of fear, hysteria, exultation, rage,
Rage to kill.

My heart burns hot, whiter and whiter,
Contracts tighter and tighter,
Until I stifle with the will
Long forged, now used
(Though utterly strained)—
O pounding heart,
Baffled, confused,
Heart panged, head singing, dizzily pained—
To do my part.

Blindness a moment. Sick.
There the men are!
Bayonets ready: click!
Time goes quick;
A stumbled prayer . . . somehow a blazing star
In a blue night . . . where?
Again prayer.
The tongue trips. Start:
How's time? Soon now. Two minutes or less.
The gun's fury mounting higher . . .
Their utmost. I lift a silent hand. Unseen I bless
Those hearts will follow me.
And beautifully,
Now beautifully my will grips,
Soul calm and round and filmed and white!

A shout: 'Men, no such order as retire!'

I nod.
The whistle's 'twixt my lips . . .
I catch
A wan, worn smile at me.
Dear men!
The pale wrist-watch . . .
The quiet hand ticks on amid the din.
The guns again
Rise to a last fury, to a rage, a lust:
Kill! Pound! Kill! Pound! Pound!
Now comes the thrust!
My part . . . dizziness . . . will . . . but trust
These men. The great guns rise;
Their fury seems to burst the earth and skies!

They lift.

Gather, heart, all thoughts that drift;
Be steel, soul,
Compress thyself
Into a round, bright whole.
I cannot speak.

Time. Time!

I hear my whistle shriek,
Between teeth set;
I fling an arm up,
Scramble up the grime
Over the parapet!
I'm up. Go on.
Something meets us.
Head down into the storm that greets us.

A wail. Robert
Lights. Blurr. Nichols
Gone.
On, on. Lead. Leăd. Hail.
Spatter. Whirr! Whirr!
'*Toward that patch of brown;*
Direction left.' Bullets a stream.
Devouring thought crying in a dream.
Men, crumpled, going down. . . .
Go on. Go.
Deafness. Numbness. The loudening tornado.
Bullets. Mud. Stumbling and skating.
My voice's strangled shout:
'*Steady pace, boys!*'
The still light: gladness.
'*Look, sir. Look out!*'
Ha! ha! Bunched figures waiting.
Revolver levelled quick!
Flick! Flick!
Red as blood.
Germans. Germans.
Good! O good!
Cool madness.

Robert Nichols

FULFILMENT

Was there love once ? I have forgotten her.
Was there grief once ? grief yet is mine.
Other loves I have, men rough, but men who stir
More grief, more joy, than love of thee and thine.

Faces cheerful, full of whimsical mirth,
Lined by the wind, burned by the sun ;
Bodies enraptured by the abounding earth,
As whose children we are brethren : one.

And any moment may descend hot death
To shatter limbs ! pulp, tear, blast
Beloved soldiers who love rough life and breath
Not less for dying faithful to the last.

O the fading eyes, the grimed face turned bony,
Oped mouth gushing, fallen head,
Lessening pressure of a hand shrunk, clammed, and
stony !
O sudden spasm, release of the dead !

Was there love once ? I have forgotten her.
Was there grief once ? grief yet is mine.
O loved, living, dying, heroic soldier,
All, all, my joy, my grief, my love, are thine !

THE PHILOSOPHER'S ORATION

Robert Nichols

(From 'A Faun's Holiday')

Meanwhile, though nations in distress
Cower at a comet's loveliness
Shaken across the midnight sky;
Though the wind roars, and Victory,
A virgin fierce, on vans of gold
Stoops through the cloud's white smother rolled
Over the armies' shock and flow
Across the broad green hills below,
Yet hovers and will not circle down
To cast t'ward one the leafy crown;
Though men drive galleys' golden beaks
To isles beyond the sunset peaks,
And cities on the sea behold
Whose walls are glass, whose gates are gold,
Whose turrets, risen in an hour,
Dazzle between the sun and shower,
Whose sole inhabitants are kings
Six cubits high with gryphon's wings
And beard and mien more glorious
Than Midas or Assaracus;
Though priests in many a hill-top fane
Lift anguished hands—and lift in vain—
Toward the sun's shaft dancing through
The bright roof's square of wind-swept blue;
Though 'cross the stars nightly arise
The silver fumes of sacrifice;
Though a new Helen bring new scars,
Pyres piled upon wrecked golden cars,
Stacked spears, rolled smoke, and spirits sped
Like a streaked flame toward the dead:

Robert Nichols

Though all these be, yet grows not old
Delight of sunned and windy wold,
Of soaking downs aglare, asteam,
Of still tarns where the yellow gleam
Of a far sunrise slowly breaks,
Or sunset strews with golden flakes
The deeps which soon the stars will throng.

For earth yet keeps her undersong
Of comfort and of ultimate peace,
That whoso seeks shall never cease
To hear at dawn or noon or night.
Joys hath she, too, joys thin and bright,
Too thin, too bright, for those to hear
Who listen with an eager ear,
Or course about and seek to spy,
Within an hour, eternity.
First must the spirit cast aside
This world's and next his own poor pride
And learn the universe to scan
More as a flower, less as a man.
Then shall he hear the lonely dead
Sing and the stars sing overhead,
And every spray upon the heath,
And larks above and ants beneath ;
The stream shall take him in her arms ;
Blue skies shall rest him in their calms ;
The wind shall be a lovely friend,
And every leaf and bough shall bend
Over him with a lover's grace.
The hills shall bare a perfect face
Full of a high solemnity ;
The heavenly clouds shall weep, and be
Content as overhead they swim
To be high brothers unto him.

No more shall he feel pitched and hurled
Uncomprehended into this world;
For every place shall be his place,
And he shall recognize its face.
At dawn he shall upon his path;
No sword shall touch him, nor the wrath
Of the ranked crowd of clamorous men.
At even he shall home again,
And lay him down to sleep at ease,
One with the Night and the Night's peace.
Ev'n Sorrow, to be escaped of none,
But a more deep communion
Shall be to him, and Death at last
No more dreaded than the Past,
Whose shadow in the brain of earth
Informs him now and gave him birth.

Robert Nichols

Robert Nichols

THE NAIADS' MUSIC

(From 'A Faun's Holiday')

Come, ye sorrowful, and steep
Your tired brows in a nectarous sleep :
For our kisses lightlier run
Than the traceries of the sun
By the lolling water cast
Up grey precipices vast,
Lifting smooth and warm and steep
Out of the palely shimmering deep.

Come, ye sorrowful, and take
Kisses that are but half awake :
For here are eyes O softer far
Than the blossom of the star
Upon the mothy twilit waters,
And here are mouths whose gentle laughters
Are but the echoes of the deep
Laughing and murmuring in its sleep.

Come, ye sorrowful, and see
The raindrops flaming goldenly
On the stream's eddies overhead
And dragonflies with drops of red
In the crisp surface of each wing
Threading slant rains that flash and sing,
Or under the water-lily's cup,
From darkling depths, roll slowly up
The bronze flanks of an ancient bream
Into the hot sun's shattered beam,
Or over a sunk tree's bubbled bole
The perch stream in a golden shoal :
Come, ye sorrowful ; our deep
Holds dreams lovelier than sleep.

But if ye sons of Sorrow come
Only wishing to be numb :
Our eyes are sad as bluebell posies,
Our breasts are soft as silken roses,
And our hands are tenderer
Than the breaths that scarce can stir
The sunlit eglantine that is
Murmurous with hidden bees.
Come, ye sorrowful, and steep
Your tired brows in a nectarous sleep.

Robert Nichols

Come, ye sorrowful, for here
No voices sound but fond and clear
Of mouths as lorn as is the rose
That under water doth disclose,
Amid her crimson petals torn,
A heart as golden as the morn ;
And here are tresses languorous
As the weeds wander over us,
And brows as holy and as bland
As the honey-coloured sand
Lying sun-entranced below
The lazy water's limpid flow :
Come, ye sorrowful, and steep
Your tired brows in a nectarous sleep.

Robert Nichols

THE PROPHETIC BARD'S ORATION

(From 'A Faun's Holiday')

'Be warned! I feel the world grow old,
And off Olympus fades the gold
Of the simple passionate sun;
And the Gods wither one by one:
Proud-eyed Apollo's bow is broken,
And throned Zeus nods nor may be woken
But by the song of spirits seven
Quiring in the midnight heaven
Of a new world no more forlorn,
Sith unto it a Babe is born,
That in a propped, thatched stable lies,
While with darkling, reverent eyes
Dusky Emperors, coifed in gold,
Kneel mid the rushy mire, and hold
Caskets of rubies, urns of myrrh,
Whose fumes enwrap the thurifer
And coil toward the high dim rafters
Where, with lutes and warbling laughters,
Clustered cherubs of rainbow feather,
Fanning the fragrant air together,
Flit in jubilant holy glee,
And make heavenly minstrelsy
To the Child their Sun, whose glow
Bathes them His cloudlets from below. . . .
Long shall this chimed accord be heard,
Yet all earth hushed at His first word:
Then shall be seen Apollo's car
Blaze headlong like a banished star;
And the Queen of heavenly Loves
Dragged downward by her dying doves;
Vulcan, spun on a wheel, shall track
The circle of the zodiac;

Silver Artemis be lost,
To the polar blizzards tossed ;
Heaven shall curdle as with blood ;
The sun be swallowed in the flood ;
The universe be silent save
For the low drone of winds that lave
The shadowed great world's ashen sides
As through the rustling void she glides.
Then shall there be a whisper heard
Of the Grave's Secret and its Word,
Where in black silence none shall cry
Save those who, dead-affrighted, spy
How from the murmurous graveyards creep
The figures of eternal sleep.
Last : when 'tis light men shall behold,
Beyond the crags, a flower of gold
Blossoming in a golden haze,
And, while they guess Zeus' halls now blaze,
Shall in the blossom's heart descry
The saints of a new hierarchy ! '

He ceased . . . and in the morning sky
Zeus' anger threatened murmurously.
I sped away. The lightning's sword
Stabbed on the forest. But the word
Abides with me. I feel its power
Most darkly in the twilit hour,
When Night's eternal shadow, cast
Over earth hushed and pale and vast,
Darkly foretells the soundless Night
In which this orb, so green, so bright,
Now spins, and which shall compass her
When on her rondure nought shall stir
But snow-whorls which the wind shall roll
From the Equator to the Pole. . . .

Robert Nichols

Robert Nichols

For everlastingly there is
Something Beyond, Behind: I wis
All Gods are haunted, and there clings,
As hound behind fled sheep, the things
Beyond the Universe's ken:
Gods haunt the Half-Gods, Half-Gods men,
And Man the brute. Gods, born of Night,
Feel a blacker appetite
Gape to devour them; Half-Gods dread
But jealous Gods; and mere men tread
Warily lest a Half-God rise
And loose on them from empty skies
Amazement, thunder, stark affright,
Famine and sudden War's thick night,
In which loud Furies hunt the Pities
Through smoke above wrecked, flaming cities.

For Pan, the Unknown God, rules all.
He shall outlive the funeral,
Change, and decay, of many Gods,
Until he, too, lets fall his rods
Of viewless power upon that minute
When Universe cowers at Infinite!

THE TOWER

Robert Nichols

It was deep night, and over Jerusalem's low roofs
The moon floated, drifting through high vaporous woofs.
The moonlight crept and glistened silent, solemn, sweet,
Over dome and column, up empty, endless street;
In the closed, scented gardens the rose loosed from the stem
Her white showery petals; none regarded them;
The starry thicket breathed odours to the sentinel palm;
Silence possessed the city like a soul possessed by calm.

Not a spark in the warren under the giant night,
Save where in a turret's lantern beamed a grave, still light:
There in the topmost chamber a gold-eyed lamp was lit—
Marvellous lamp in darkness, informing, redeeming it!
For, set in that tiny chamber, Jesus, the blessed and doomed,
Spoke to the lone apostles as light to men entombed;
And spreading his hands in blessing, as one soon to be dead,
He put soft enchantment into spare wine and bread.

The hearts of the disciples were broken and full of tears,
Because their lord, the spearless, was hedgéd about with spears;

And in his face the sickness of departure had spread a gloom,
At leaving his young friends friendless.
They could not forget the tomb.
He smiled subduedly, telling, in tones soft as voice of the dove,
The endlessness of sorrow, the eternal solace of love;
And lifting the earthly tokens, wine and sorrowful bread,
He bade them sup and remember one who lived and was dead.
And they could not restrain their weeping.
But one rose up to depart,
Having weakness and hate of weakness raging within his heart,
And bowed to the robed assembly whose eyes gleamed wet in the light.
Judas arose and departed: night went out to the night.

Then Jesus lifted his voice like a fountain in an ocean of tears,
And comforted his disciples and calmed and allayed their fears.
But Judas wound down the turret, creeping from floor to floor,
And would fly; but one leaning, weeping, barred him beside the door.
And he knew her by her ruddy garment and two yet-watching men:
Mary of Seven Evils, Mary Magdalen.
And he was frighted at her. She sighed: 'I dreamed him dead.

We sell the body for silver. . . .' Robert
Then Judas cried out and fled Nichols
Forth into the night! . . . The moon had begun
to set:
A drear, deft wind went sifting, setting the dust
afret;
Into the heart of the city Judas ran on and prayed
To stern Jehovah lest his deed make him afraid.

But in the tiny lantern, hanging as if on air,
The disciples sat unspeaking. Amaze and peace
were there.
For *his* voice, more lovely than song of all earthly
birds,
In accents humble and happy spoke slow, consoling
words.

Thus Jesus discoursed, and was silent, sitting up-
right, and soon
Past the casement behind him slanted the sinking
moon;
And, rising for Olivet, all stared, between love and
dread,
Seeing the torrid moon a ruddy halo behind his
head.

HAROLD MONRO

TWO POEMS

Harold Monro

(*Numbers* I *and* X *in* '*Strange Meetings*.')

I

If suddenly a clod of earth should rise,
And walk about, and breathe, and speak, and love,
How one would tremble, and in what surprise
Gasp: 'Can *you* move?'

I see men walking, and I always feel:
'Earth! How have you done this? What can you be?'
I can't learn how to know men, or conceal
How strange they are to me.

II

A flower is looking through the ground,
Blinking at the April weather;
Now a child has seen the flower:
Now they go and play together.

Now it seems the flower will speak,
And will call the child its brother—
But, oh strange forgetfulness!—
They don't recognize each other.

EVERY THING

Since man has been articulate,
Mechanical, improvidently wise,
(Servant of Fate),
He has not understood the little cries
And foreign conversations of the small
Delightful creatures that have followed him
Not far behind ;
Has failed to hear the sympathetic call
Of Crockery and Cutlery, those kind
Reposeful Teraphim
Of his domestic happiness ; the Stool
He sat on, or the Door he entered through :
He has not thanked them, overbearing fool !
What is he coming to ?

But you should listen to the talk of these.
Honest they are, and patient they have kept,
Served him without his *Thank you* or his *Please* . . .
I often heard
The gentle Bed, a sigh between each word,
Murmuring, before I slept.
The Candle, as I blew it, cried aloud,
Then bowed,
And in a smoky argument
Into the darkness went.

The Kettle puffed a tentacle of breath :—
' Pooh ! I have boiled his water, I don't know
Why ; and he always says I boil too slow.
He never calls me " Sukie, dear," and oh,
I wonder why I squander my desire
Sitting submissive on his kitchen fire.'

Now the old Copper Basin suddenly
Rattled and tumbled from the shelf,
Bumping and crying: 'I can fall by myself;
Without a woman's hand
To patronize and coax and flatter me,
I understand
The lean and poise of gravitable land.'
It gave a raucous and tumultuous shout,
Twisted itself convulsively about,
Rested upon the floor, and, while I stare,
It stares and grins at me.

The old impetuous Gas above my head
Begins irascibly to flare and fret,
Wheezing into its epileptic jet,
Reminding me I ought to go to bed.

The Rafters creak; an Empty-Cupboard door
Swings open; now a wild Plank of the floor
Breaks from its joist, and leaps behind my foot.
Down from the chimney half a pound of Soot
Tumbles, and lies, and shakes itself again.
The Putty cracks against the window-pane.
A piece of Paper in the basket shoves
Another piece, and toward the bottom moves.
My independent Pencil, while I write,
Breaks at the point: the ruminating Clock
Stirs all its body and begins to rock,
Warning the waiting presence of the Night,
Strikes the dead hour, and tumbles to the plain
Ticking of ordinary work again.

You do well to remind me, and I praise
Your strangely individual foreign ways.
You call me from myself to recognize
Companionship in your unselfish eyes.

Harold Monro

Harold Monro

I want your dear acquaintances, although
I pass you arrogantly over, throw
Your lovely sounds, and squander them along
My busy days. I'll do you no more wrong.

Purr for me, Sukie, like a faithful cat.
You, my well trampled Boots, and you, my Hat,
Remain my friends : I feel, though I don't speak,
Your touch grow kindlier from week to week.
It well becomes our mutual happiness
To go toward the same end more or less.
There is not much dissimilarity,
Not much to choose, I know it well, in fine,
Between the purposes of you and me,
And your eventual Rubbish Heap, and mine.

SOLITUDE

Harold Monro

When you have tidied all things for the night,
And while your thoughts are fading to their sleep,
You'll pause a moment in the late firelight,
Too sorrowful to weep.

The large and gentle furniture has stood
In sympathetic silence all the day
With that old kindness of domestic wood ;
Nevertheless the haunted room will say :
' Some one must be away.'

The little dog rolls over half awake,
Stretches his paws, yawns, looking up at you,
Wags his tail very slightly for your sake,
That you may feel he is unhappy too.

A distant engine whistles, or the floor
Creaks, or the wandering night-wind bangs a door.

Silence is scattered like a broken glass.
The minutes prick their ears and run about,
Then one by one subside again and pass
Sedately in, monotonously out.

You bend your head and wipe away a tear.
Solitude walks one heavy step more near.

WEEK-END

I

The train ! The twelve o'clock for paradise.
Hurry, or it will try to creep away.
Out in the country every one is wise :
We can be only wise on Saturday.
There you are waiting, little friendly house :
Those are your chimney-stacks with you between,
Surrounded by old trees and strolling cows,
Staring through all your windows at the green.
Your homely floor is creaking for our tread ;
The smiling tea-pot with contented spout
Thinks of the boiling water, and the bread
Longs for the butter. All their hands are out
To greet us, and the gentle blankets seem
Purring and crooning : 'Lie in us, and dream.'

II

The key will stammer, and the door reply,
The hall wake, yawn, and smile ; the torpid stair
Will grumble at our feet, the table cry :
'Fetch my belongings for me ; I am bare.'
A clatter ! Something in the attic falls.
A ghost has lifted up his robes and fled.
The loitering shadows move along the walls ;
Then silence very slowly lifts his head.
The starling with impatient screech has flown
The chimney, and is watching from the tree.
They thought us gone for ever : mouse alone
Stops in the middle of the floor to see.
Now all you idle things, resume your toil.
Hearth, put your flames on. Sulky kettle, boil.

III

Contented evening; comfortable joys;
The snoozing fire, and all the fields are still:
Tranquil delight, no purpose, and no noise—
Unless the slow wind flowing round the hill.
'Murry' (the kettle) dozes; little mouse
Is rambling prudently about the floor.
There's lovely conversation in this house:
Words become princes that were slaves before.
What a sweet atmosphere for you and me
The people that have been here left behind....
Oh, but I fear it may turn out to be
Built of a dream, erected in the mind:
So if we speak too loud, we may awaken
To find it vanished, and ourselves mistaken.

IV

Lift up the curtain carefully. All the trees
Stand in the dark like drowsy sentinels.
The oak is talkative to-night; he tells
The little bushes crowding at his knees
That formidable, hard, voluminous
History of growth from acorn into age.
They titter like school-children; they arouse
Their comrades, who exclaim: 'He is very sage.'
Look how the moon is staring through that cloud,
Laying and lifting idle streaks of light.
O hark! was that the monstrous wind, so loud
And sudden, prowling always through the night?
Let down the shaking curtain. They are queer,
Those foreigners. They and we live so near.

v

Come, come to bed. The shadows move about,
And some one seems to overhear our talk.
The fire is low; the candles flicker out;
The ghosts of former tenants want to walk.
Already they are shuffling through the gloom.
I felt an old man touch my shoulder-blade;
Once he was married here; they love this room,
He and his woman and the child they made.
Dead, dead, they are, yet some familiar sound,
Creeping along the brink of happy life,
Revives their memory from under ground—
The farmer and his troublesome old wife.
Let us be going: as we climb the stairs,
They'll sit down in our warm half-empty chairs.

vi

Morning! Wake up! Awaken! All the boughs
Are rippling on the air across the green.
The youngest birds are singing to the house.
Blood of the world!—and is the country clean?
Disturb the precinct. Cool it with a shout.
Sing as you trundle down to light the fire.
Turn the encumbering shadows tumbling out,
And fill the chambers with a new desire.
Life is no good, unless the morning brings
White happiness and quick delight of day.
These half-inanimate domestic things
Must all be useful, or must go away.
Coffee, be fragrant. Porridge in my plate,
Increase the vigour to fulfil my fate.

VII

The fresh air moves like water round a boat.
The white clouds wander. Let us wander too.
The whining, wavering plover flap and float.
That crow is flying after that cuckoo.
Look! Look! . . . They're gone. What are the great trees calling?
Just come a little farther, by that edge
Of green, to where the stormy ploughland, falling
Wave upon wave, is lapping to the hedge.
Oh, what a lovely bank! Give me your hand.
Lie down and press your heart against the ground.
Let us both listen till we understand,
Each through the other, every natural sound. . . .
I can't hear anything to-day, can you,
But, far and near: 'Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo!'?

VIII

The everlasting grass—how bright, how cool!
The day has gone too suddenly, too soon.
There's something white and shiny in that pool—
Throw in a stone, and you will hit the moon.
Listen, the church-bell ringing! Do not say
We must go back to-morrow to our work.
We'll tell them we are dead: we died to-day.
We're lazy. We're too happy. We will shirk.
We're cows. We're kettles. We'll be anything
Except the manikins of time and fear.
We'll start away to-morrow wandering,
And nobody will notice in a year. . . .
Now the great sun is slipping under ground.
Grip firmly!—How the earth is whirling round!

IX

Be staid ; be careful ; and be not too free.
Temptation to enjoy your liberty
May rise against you, break into a crime,
And smash the habit of employing Time.
It serves no purpose that the careful clock
  Mark the appointment, the officious train
Hurry to keep it, if the minutes mock
  Loud in your ear: 'Late. Late. Late. Late again.'
Week-end is very well on Saturday :
  On Monday it's a different affair—
A little episode, a trivial stay
  In some oblivious spot somehow, somewhere.
    On Sunday night we hardly laugh or speak:
    Week-end begins to merge itself in Week.

X

Pack up the house, and close the creaking door.
  The fields are dull this morning in the rain.
It's difficult to leave that homely floor.
  Wave a light hand ; we will return again.
(What was that bird ?) Good-bye, ecstatic tree,
  Floating, bursting, and breathing on the air.
The lonely farm is wondering that we
  Can leave. How every window seems to stare !
That bag is heavy. Share it for a bit.
  You like that gentle swashing of the ground
As we tread ? . . .
    It is over. Now we sit
  Reading the morning paper in the sound
    Of the debilitating heavy train.
      London again, again. London again.

THE BIRD AT DAWN

Harold Monro

What I saw was just one eye
In the dawn as I was going :
A bird can carry all the sky
In that little button glowing.

Never in my life I went
So deep into the firmament.

He was standing on a tree,
All in blossom overflowing ;
And he purposely looked hard at me,
At first, as if to question merrily :
' Where are you going ? '
But next some far more serious thing to say :
I could not answer, could not look away.

Oh, that hard, round, and so distracting eye :
Little mirror of all sky !—
And then the after-song another tree
Held, and sent radiating back on me.

If no man had invented human word,
And a bird-song had been
The only way to utter what we mean,
What would we men have heard,
What understood, what seen,
Between the trills and pauses, in between
The singing and the silence of a bird ?

JOHN MASEFIELD

I

Here in the self is all that man can know
Of Beauty, all the wonder, all the power,
All the unearthly colour, all the glow,
Here in the self which withers like a flower;
Here in the self which fades as hours pass,
And droops and dies and rots and is forgotten
Sooner, by ages, than the mirroring glass
In which it sees its glory still unrotten.
Here in the flesh, within the flesh, behind,
Swift in the blood and throbbing on the bone,
Beauty herself, the universal mind,
Eternal April wandering alone;
The God, the holy Ghost, the atoning Lord,
Here in the flesh, the never yet explored.

II

What am I, Life? A thing of watery salt
Held in cohesion by unresting cells
Which work they know not why, which never halt,
Myself unwitting where their master dwells.
I do not bid them, yet they toil, they spin;
A world which uses me as I use them,
Nor do I know which end or which begin,
Nor which to praise, which pamper, which condemn.
So, like a marvel in a marvel set,
I answer to the vast, as wave by wave
The sea of air goes over, dry or wet,
Or the full moon comes swimming from her cave,
Or the great sun comes north, this myriad I
Tingles, not knowing how, yet wondering why.

III

If I could get within this changing I,
This ever altering thing which yet persists,
Keeping the features it is reckoned by,
While each component atom breaks or twists;
If, wandering past strange groups of shifting forms,
Cells at their hidden marvels hard at work,
Pale from much toil, or red from sudden storms,
I might attain to where the Rulers lurk;
If, pressing past the guards in those grey gates,
The brain's most folded, intertwisted shell,
I might attain to that which alters fates,
The King, the supreme self, the Master Cell;
Then, on Man's earthly peak, I might behold
The unearthly self beyond, unguessed, untold.

IV

Ah, we are neither heaven nor earth, but men;
Something that uses and despises both,
That takes its earth's contentment in the pen,
Then sees the world's injustice and is wroth,
And flinging off youth's happy promise, flies
Up to some breach, despising earthly things,
And, in contempt of hell and heaven, dies
Rather than bear some yoke of priests or kings.
Our joys are not of heaven nor earth, but man's,
A woman's beauty, or a child's delight,
The trembling blood when the discoverer scans
The sought-for world, the guessed-at satellite;
The ringing scene, the stone at point to blush
For unborn men to look at and say 'Hush.'

v

Roses are beauty, but I never see
Those blood drops from the burning heart of June
Glowing like thought upon the living tree
Without a pity that they die so soon,
Die into petals, like those roses old,
Those women, who were summer in men's hearts
Before the smile upon the Sphinx was cold
Or sand had hid the Syrian and his arts.
O myriad dust of beauty that lies thick
Under our feet that not a single grain
But stirred and moved in beauty and was quick
For one brief moon and died nor lived again;
But when the moon rose lay upon the grass
Pasture to living beauty, life that was.

vi

I went into the fields, but you were there
Waiting for me, so all the summer flowers
Were only glimpses of your starry powers;
Beautiful and inspired dust they were.

I went down by the waters, and a bird
Sang with your voice in all the unknown tones
Of all that self of you I have not heard,
So that my being felt you to the bones.

I went into the house, and shut the door
To be alone, but you were there with me;
All beauty in a little room may be,
Though the roof lean and muddy be the floor.

Then in my bed I bound my tired eyes
To make a darkness for my weary brain ;
But like a presence you were there again,
Being and real, beautiful and wise,

So that I could not sleep, and cried aloud,
'You strange grave thing, what is it you would say ?'
The redness of your dear lips dimmed to grey,
The waters ebbed, the moon hid in a cloud.

VII

Death lies in wait for you, you wild thing in the wood,
Shy-footed beauty dear, half-seen, half-understood,
Glimpsed in the beech-wood dim and in the dropping fir,
Shy like a fawn and sweet and beauty's minister.
Glimpsed as in flying clouds by night the little moon,
A wonder, a delight, a paleness passing soon.

Only a moment held, only an hour seen,
Only an instant known in all that life has been,
One instant in the sand to drink that gush of grace,
The beauty of your way, the marvel of your face.

Death lies in wait for you, but few short hours he gives ;
I perish even as you by whom all spirit lives.
Come to me, spirit, come, and fill my hour of breath
With hours of life in life that pay no toll to death.

RALPH HODGSON

THE GIPSY GIRL

Ralph Hodgson

'Come, try your skill, kind gentlemen,
A penny for three tries!'
Some threw and lost, some threw and won
A ten-a-penny prize.

She was a tawny gipsy girl,
A girl of twenty years,
I liked her for the lumps of gold
That jingled from her ears;

I liked the flaring yellow scarf
Bound loose about her throat,
I liked her showy purple gown
And flashy velvet coat.

A man came up, too loose of tongue,
And said no good to her;
She did not blush as Saxons do,
Or turn upon the cur;

She fawned and whined 'Sweet gentleman,
A penny for three tries!'
—But oh, the den of wild things in
The darkness of her eyes!

Ralph Hodgson

THE BELLS OF HEAVEN

'Twould ring the bells of Heaven
The wildest peal for years,
If Parson lost his senses
And people came to theirs,
And he and they together
Knelt down with angry prayers
For tamed and shabby tigers
And dancing dogs and bears,
And wretched, blind pit ponies,
And little hunted hares.

BABYLON

Ralph Hodgson

If you could bring her glories back!
You gentle sirs who sift the dust
And burrow in the mould and must
Of Babylon for bric-a-brac;
Who catalogue and pigeon-hole
The faded splendours of her soul
And put her greatness under glass—
If you could bring her past to pass!

If you could bring her dead to life!
The soldier lad; the market wife;
Madam buying fowls from her;
Tip, the butcher's bandy cur;
Workmen carting bricks and clay;
Babel passing to and fro
On the business of a day
Gone three thousand years ago—
That you cannot; then be done,
Put the goblet down again,
Let the broken arch remain,
Leave the dead men's dust alone—

Is it nothing how she lies,
This old mother of you all,
You great cities proud and tall
Towering to a hundred skies
Round a world she never knew,
Is it nothing, this, to you?
Must the ghoulish work go on
Till her very floors are gone?
While there's still a brick to save
Drive these people from her grave.

Ralph Hodgson

The Jewish seer when he cried
Woe to Babel's lust and pride
Saw the foxes at her gates ;
Once again the wild thing waits.
Then leave her in her last decay
A house of owls, a foxes' den ;
The desert that till yesterday
Hid her from the eyes of men
In its proper time and way
Will take her to itself again.

ROBERT GRAVES

IT'S A QUEER TIME

Robert Graves

It's hard to know if you're alive or dead
When steel and fire go roaring through your head.

One moment you'll be crouching at your gun
Traversing, mowing heaps down half in fun:
The next, you choke and clutch at your right
breast—
No time to think—leave all—and off you go . . .
To Treasure Island where the Spice winds blow,
To lovely groves of mango, quince and lime—
Breathe no good-bye, but ho, for the Red West!
It's a queer time.

You're charging madly at them yelling 'Fag!'
When somehow something gives and your feet
drag.
You fall and strike your head; yet feel no pain
And find . . . you're digging tunnels through the
hay
In the Big Barn, 'cause it's a rainy day.
Oh springy hay, and lovely beams to climb!
You're back in the old sailor suit again.
It's a queer time.

Or you'll be dozing safe in your dug-out—
A great roar—the trench shakes and falls about—
You're struggling, gasping, struggling, then . . .
hullo!
Elsie comes tripping gaily down the trench,
Hanky to nose—that lyddite makes a stench—
Getting her pinafore all over grime.
Funny! because she died ten years ago!
It's a queer time.

Robert Graves

The trouble is, things happen much too quick;
Up jump the Bosches, rifles thump and click,
You stagger, and the whole scene fades away:
Even good Christians don't like passing straight
From Tipperary or their Hymn of Hate
To Alleluiah-chanting, and the chime
Of golden harps . . . and . . . I'm not well to-
day . . .
It's a queer time.

GOLIATH AND DAVID

Robert Graves

(For D. C. T., killed at Fricourt, March 1916)

Once an earlier David took
Smooth pebbles from the brook:
Out between the lines he went
To that one-sided tournament,
A shepherd boy who stood out fine
And young to fight a Philistine
Clad all in brazen mail. He swears
That he's killed lions, he's killed bears,
And those that scorn the God of Zion
Shall perish so like bear or lion.
But . . . the historian of that fight
Had not the heart to tell it right.

Striding within javelin range
Goliath marvels at this strange
Goodly-faced boy so proud of strength.
David's clear eye measures the length;
With hand thrust back, he cramps one knee,
Poises a moment thoughtfully,
And hurls with a long vengeful swing.
The pebble, humming from the sling
Like a wild bee, flies a sure line
For the forehead of the Philistine;
Then . . . but there comes a brazen clink
And quicker than a man can think
Goliath's shield parries each cast.
Clang! clang! and clang! was David's last
Scorn blazes in the Giant's eye,
Towering unhurt six cubits high.
Says foolish David, 'Damn your shield!
And damn my sling! but I'll not yield.'

Robert Graves

He takes his staff of Mamre oak,
A knotted shepherd-staff that's broke
The skull of many a wolf and fox
Come filching lambs from Jesse's flocks.
Loud laughs Goliath, and that laugh
Can scatter chariots like blown chaff
To rout: but David, calm and brave,
Holds his ground, for God will save.
Steel crosses wood, a flash, and oh!
Shame for Beauty's overthrow!
(God's eyes are dim, His ears are shut.)
One cruel backhand sabre cut—
'I'm hit! I'm killed!' young David cries,
Throws blindly forward, chokes . . . and dies.
And look, spike-helmeted, grey, grim,
Goliath straddles over him.

A PINCH OF SALT

Robert Graves

When a dream is born in you
  With a sudden clamorous pain,
When you know the dream is true
  And lovely, with no flaw nor stain,
O then, be careful, or with sudden clutch
You'll hurt the delicate thing you prize so much.

Dreams are like a bird that mocks,
  Flirting the feathers of his tail.
When you seize at the salt-box
  Over the hedge you'll see him sail.
Old birds are neither caught with salt nor chaff:
They watch you from the apple bough and laugh.

Poet, never chase the dream.
  Laugh yourself and turn away.
Mask your hunger, let it seem
  Small matter if he come or stay;
But when he nestles in your hand at last,
Close up your fingers tight and hold him fast.

Robert Graves

STAR-TALK

'Are you awake, Gemelli,
This frosty night?'
'We'll be awake till reveillé,
Which is Sunrise,' say the Gemelli,
'It's no good trying to go to sleep:
If there's wine to be got we'll drink it deep,
But rest is hopeless to-night,
But rest is hopeless to-night.'

'Are you cold too, poor Pleiads,
This frosty night?'
'Yes, and so are the Hyads:
See us cuddle and hug,' say the Pleiads,
'All six in a ring: it keeps us warm:
We huddle together like birds in a storm:
It's bitter weather to-night,
It's bitter weather to-night.'

'What do you hunt, Orion,
This starry night?'
'The Ram, the Bull and the Lion,
And the Great Bear,' says Orion,
'With my starry quiver and beautiful belt
I am trying to find a good thick pelt
To warm my shoulders to-night,
To warm my shoulders to-night.'

'Did you hear that, Great She-bear,
This frosty night?'
'Yes, he's talking of stripping *me* bare
Of my own big fur,' says the She-bear,
I'm afraid of the man and his terrible arrow:
The thought of it chills my bones to the marrow,
And the frost so cruel to-night!
And the frost so cruel to-night!'

'How is your trade, Aquarius,
  This frosty night?'
'Complaints is many and various
And my feet are cold,' says Aquarius,
'There's Venus objects to Dolphin-scales,
And Mars to Crab-spawn found in my pails,
  And the pump has frozen to-night,
  And the pump has frozen to-night.'

Robert Graves

Robert Graves

IN THE WILDERNESS

Christ of his gentleness
Thirsting and hungering,
Walked in the wilderness;
Soft words of grace he spoke
Unto lost desert-folk
That listened wondering.
He heard the bitterns call
From ruined palace-wall,
Answered them brotherly.
He held communion
With the she-pelican
Of lonely piety.
Basilisk, cockatrice,
Flocked to his homilies,
With mail of dread device,
With monstrous barbèd stings,
With eager dragon-eyes;
Great rats on leather wings
And poor blind broken things,
Foul in their miseries.
And ever with him went,
Of all his wanderings
Comrade, with ragged coat,
Gaunt ribs—poor innocent—
Bleeding foot, burning throat,
The guileless old scape-goat;
For forty nights and days
Followed in Jesus' ways,
Sure guard behind him kept,
Tears like a lover wept.

THE BOY IN CHURCH

Robert Graves

'Gabble-gabble . . . brethren . . . gabble-gabble!'
My window glimpses larch and heather.
I hardly hear the tuneful babble,
Not knowing nor much caring whether
The text is praise or exhortation,
Prayer or thanksgiving or damnation.

Outside it blows wetter and wetter,
The tossing trees never stay still;
I shift my elbows to catch better
The full round sweep of heathered hill.
The tortured copse bends to and fro
In silence like a shadow-show.

The parson's voice runs like a river
Over smooth rocks. I like this church.
The pews are staid, they never shiver,
They never bend or sway or lurch.
'Prayer,' says the kind voice, 'is a chain
That draws down Grace from Heaven again.'

I add the hymns up over and over
Until there's not the least mistake.
Seven-seventy-one. (Look! there's a plover!
It's gone!) Who's that Saint by the Lake?
The red light from his mantle passes
Across the broad memorial brasses.

. . . . .

Robert Graves

It's pleasant here for dreams and thinking,
  Lolling and letting reason nod,
With ugly, serious people linking
  Prayer-chains for a forgiving God.
But a dumb blast sets the trees swaying
With furious zeal like madmen praying.

THE LADY VISITOR IN THE PAUPER WARD

Robert Graves

Why do you break upon this old, cool peace,
This painted peace of ours,
With harsh dress hissing like a flock of geese,
With garish flowers ?
Why do you churn smooth waters rough again,
Selfish old Skin-and-bone ?
Leave us to quiet dreaming and slow pain,
Leave us alone.

Robert Graves

NOT DEAD

Walking through trees to cool my heat and pain,
I know that David's with me here again.
All that is simple, happy, strong, he is.
Caressingly I stroke
Rough bark of the friendly oak.
A brook goes bubbling by : the voice is his.
Turf burns with pleasant smoke :
I laugh at chaffinch and at primroses.
All that is simple, happy, strong, he is.
Over the whole wood in a little while
Breaks his slow smile.

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

RUPERT BROOKE

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson

Your face was lifted to the golden sky
Ablaze beyond the black roofs of the square,
As flame on flame leapt, flourishing in air
Its tumult of red stars exultantly,
To the cold constellations dim and high;
And as we neared, the roaring ruddy flare
Kindled to gold your throat and brow and hair
Until you burned, a flame of ecstasy.

The golden head goes down into the night
Quenched in cold gloom—and yet again you stand
Beside me now with lifted face alight,
As, flame to flame, and fire to fire you burn . . .
Then, recollecting, laughingly you turn,
And look into my eyes and take my hand.

Wilfrid
Wilson
Gibson

TENANTS

Suddenly, out of dark and leafy ways,
We came upon the little house asleep
In cold blind stillness, shadowless and deep,
In the white magic of the full moon-blaze.
Strangers without the gate, we stood agaze,
Fearful to break that quiet, and to creep
Into the home that had been ours to keep
Through a long year of happy nights and days.

So unfamiliar in the white moon-gleam,
So old and ghostly like a house of dream
It seemed, that over us there stole the dread
That even as we watched it, side by side,
The ghosts of lovers, who had lived and died
Within its walls, were sleeping in our bed.

FOR G.

Wilfrid
Wilson
Gibson

All night under the moon
  Plovers are flying
Over the dreaming meadows of silvery light,
Over the meadows of June,
  Flying and crying—
Wandering voices of love in the hush of the night.

All night under the moon,
  Love, though we're lying
Quietly under the thatch, in silvery light
Over the meadows of June
  Together we're flying—
Rapturous voices of love in the hush of the night?

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson

SEA-CHANGE

Wind-flicked and ruddy her young body glowed
In sunny shallows, splashing them to spray;
But when on rippled, silver sand she lay,
And over her the little green waves flowed,
Coldly translucent and moon-coloured showed
Her frail young beauty, as if rapt away
From all the light and laughter of the day
To some twilit, forlorn sea-god's abode.

Again into the sun with happy cry
She leapt alive and sparkling from the sea,
Sprinkling white spray against the hot blue sky,
A laughing girl . . . and yet, I see her lie
Under a deeper tide eternally
In cold moon-coloured immortality.

BATTLE

I

The Return

He went, and he was gay to go:
  And I smiled on him as he went.
My boy! 'Twas well he couldn't know
  My darkest dread, or what it meant—

Just what it meant to smile and smile
  And let my son go cheerily—
My son . . . and wondering all the while
  What stranger would come back to me.

II

The Dancers

All day beneath the hurtling shells
  Before my burning eyes
Hover the dainty demoiselles—
  The peacock dragon-flies.

Unceasingly they dart and glance
  Above the stagnant stream—
And I am fighting here in France
  As in a senseless dream.

A dream of shattering black shells
  That hurtle overhead,
And dainty dancing demoiselles
  Above the dreamless dead.

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson

III

Hit

Out of the sparkling sea
I drew my tingling body clear, and lay
On a low ledge the livelong summer day,
Basking, and watching lazily
White sails in Falmouth Bay.

My body seemed to burn
Salt in the sun that drenched it through and through
Till every particle glowed clean and new
And slowly seemed to turn
To lucent amber in a world of blue. . . .

I felt a sudden wrench—
A trickle of warm blood—
And found that I was sprawling in the mud
Among the dead men in the trench.

LAMENT

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson

We who are left, how shall we look again
Happily on the sun or feel the rain
Without remembering how they who went
Ungrudgingly and spent
Their lives for us loved, too, the sun and rain?

A bird among the rain-wet lilac sings—
But we, how shall we turn to little things
And listen to the birds and winds and streams
Made holy by their dreams,
Nor feel the heart-break in the heart of things?

JOHN FREEMAN

MUSIC COMES

John Freeman

Music comes
Sweetly from the trembling string
When wizard fingers sweep
Dreamily, half asleep ;
When through remembering reeds
Ancient airs and murmurs creep,
Oboe oboe following,
Flute answering clear high flute,
Voices, voices—falling mute,
And the jarring drums.

At night I heard
First a waking bird
Out of the quiet darkness sing . . .
Music comes
Strangely to the brain asleep !
And I heard
Soft, wizard fingers sweep
Music from the trembling string,
And through remembering reeds
Ancient airs and murmurs creep ;
Oboe oboe following,
Flute calling clear high flute,
Voices faint, falling mute,
And low jarring drums ;
Then all those airs
Sweetly jangled—newly strange,
Rich with change . . .
Was it the wind in the reeds ?
Did the wind range
Over the trembling string ;

John
Freeman

Into flute and oboe pouring
Solemn music; sinking, soaring
Low to high,
Up and down the sky?
Was it the wind jarring
Drowsy far-off drums?

Strangely to the brain asleep
Music comes.

NOVEMBER SKIES

John Freeman

Than these November skies
Is no sky lovelier. The clouds are deep;
Into their grey the subtle spies
Of colour creep,
Changing that high austerity to delight,
Till ev'n the leaden interfolds are bright.
And, where the cloud breaks, faint far azure peers
Ere a thin flushing cloud again
Shuts up that loveliness, or shares.
The huge great clouds move slowly, gently, as
Reluctant the quick sun should shine in vain,
Holding in bright caprice their rain.
    And when of colours none,
Not rose, nor amber, nor the scarce late green,
Is truly seen,—
In all the myriad grey,
In silver height and dusky deep, remain
The loveliest,
Faint purple flushes of the unvanquished sun.

John Freeman

DISCOVERY

Beauty walked over the hills and made them bright.
She in the long fresh grass scattered her rains
Sparkling and glittering like a host of stars,
But not like stars cold, severe, terrible.
Hers was the laughter of the wind that leaped
Arm-full of shadows, flinging them far and wide.
Hers the bright light within the quick green
Of every new leaf on the oldest tree.
It was her swimming made the river run
Shining as the sun;
Her voice, escaped from winter's chill and dark,
Singing in the incessant lark. . . .
All this was hers—yet all this had not been
Except 'twas seen.
It was my eyes, Beauty, that made thee bright;
My ears that heard, the blood leaping in my veins,
The vehemence of transfiguring thought—
Not lights and shadows, birds, grasses and rains—
That made thy wonders wonderful.
For it has been, Beauty, that I have seen thee,
Tedious as a painted cloth at a bad play,
Empty of meaning and so of all delight.
Now thou hast blessed me with a great pure bliss,
Shaking thy rainy light all over the earth,
And I have paid thee with my thankfulness.

'IT WAS THE LOVELY MOON'

John Freeman

It was the lovely moon—she lifted
Slowly her white brow among
Bronze cloud-waves that ebbed and drifted
Faintly, faintlier afar.
Calm she looked, yet pale with wonder,
Sweet in unwonted thoughtfulness,
Watching the earth that dwindled under
Faintly, faintlier afar.
It was the lovely moon that lovelike
Hovered over the wandering, tired
Earth, her bosom grey and dovelike,
Hovering beautiful as a dove. . . .
The lovely moon :—her soft light falling
Lightly on roof and poplar and pine—
Tree to tree whispering and calling,
Wonderful in the silvery shine
Of the round, lovely, thoughtful moon.

John Freeman

STONE TREES

Last night a sword-light in the sky
Flashed a swift terror on the dark.
In that sharp light the fields did lie
Naked and stone-like ; each tree stood
Like a tranced woman, bound and stark.
  Far off the wood
With darkness ridged the riven dark.

And cows astonied stared with fear,
And sheep crept to the knees of cows,
And conies to their burrows slid,
And rooks were still in rigid boughs,
And all things else were still or hid.
  From all the wood
Came but the owl's hoot, ghostly, clear.

In that cold trance the earth was held
It seemed an age, or time was nought.
Sure never from that stone-like field
Sprang golden corn, nor from those chill
Grey granite trees was music wrought.
  In all the wood
Even the tall poplar hung stone still.

It seemed an age, or time was none . . .
Slowly the earth heaved out of sleep
And shivered, and the trees of stone
Bent and sighed in the gusty wind,
And rain swept as birds flocking sweep.
  Far off the wood
Rolled the slow thunders on the wind.

From all the wood came no brave bird,
No song broke through the close-fall'n night,
Nor any sound from cowering herd:
Only a dog's long lonely howl
When from the window poured pale light.
And from the wood
The hoot came ghostly of the owl.

John Freeman

John Freeman

THE PIGEONS

The pigeons, following the faint warm light,
Stayed at last on the roof till warmth was gone,
Then in the mist that's hastier than night
Disappeared all behind the carved dark stone,
Huddling from the black cruelty of the frost.
With the new sparkling sun they swooped and
came
Like a cloud between the sun and street, and then
Like a cloud blown from the blue north were lost,
Vanishing and returning ever again,
Small cloud following cloud across the flame
That clear and meagre burned and burned away
And left the ice unmelting day by day.

. . . Nor could the sun through the roof's purple
slate
(Though his gold magic played with shadow there
And drew the pigeons from the streaming air)
With any fiery magic penetrate.
Under the roof the air and water froze,
And no smoke from the gaping chimney rose.
The silver frost upon the window pane
Flowered and branched each starving night anew,
And stranger, lovelier and crueller grew ;
Pouring her silver that cold silver through,
The moon made all the dim flower bright again.

. . . Pouring her silver through that barren flower
Of silver frost, until it filled and whitened
A room where two small children waited, frightened
At the pale ghost of light that hour by hour
Stared at them till though fear slept not they slept.
And when that white ghost from the window crept,

And day came and they woke and saw all plain John
Though still the frost-flower blinded the window Freeman
pane,
And touched their mother and touched her hand in
vain,
And wondered why she woke not when they woke ;
And wondered what it was their sleep that broke
When hand in hand they stared and stared, so
frightened ;
They feared and waited, and waited all day long,
While all the shadows went and the day bright-
ened,
All the ill shadows but one shadow strong.

Outside were busy feet and human speech
And daily cries and horns. Maybe they heard,
Painfully wondering still, and each to each
Leaning, and listening if their mother stirred—
Cold, cold,
Hungering as the long slow hours grew old,
Though food within the cupboard idle lay
Beyond their thought, or but beyond their reach.
The soft blue pigeons all the afternoon
Sunned themselves on the roof or rose at play,
Then with the shrinking light fluttered away ;
And once more came the icy-hearted moon,
Staring down at the frightened children there
That could but shiver and stare.

How many hours, how many days, who knows ?
Neighbours there were who thought they had gone
away
To return some luckier or luckless day.
No sound came from the room : the cold air froze
The very echo of the childrens' sighs.
And what they saw within each other's eyes,

Or heard each other's heart say as they peered
At the dead mother lying there, and feared
That she might wake, and then might never wake,
Who knows, who knows ?
None heard a living sound their silence break.

In those cold days and nights how many birds,
Flittering above the fields and streams all frozen,
Watched hungrily the tended flocks and herds—
Earth's chosen nourished by earth's wise self-chosen !
How many birds suddenly stiffened and died
With no plaint cried,
The starved heart ceasing when the pale sun ceased !
And when the new day stepped from the same cold East
The dead birds lay in the light on the snow-flecked field,
Their song and beautiful free winging stilled.

I walked under snow-sprinkled hills at night,
And starry sprinkled skies deep blue and bright.
The keen wind thrust with his knife against the thin
Breast of the wood as I went tingling by,
And heard a weak cheep-cheep,—no more—the cry
Of a bird that crouched the smitten wood within . . .
But no one heeded that sharp spiritual cry
Of the two children in their misery,
When in the cold and famished night death's shade
More terrible the moon's cold shadows made.
How was it none could hear
That bodiless crying, birdlike, sharp and clear ?

I cannot think what they, unanswered, thought — John
When the night came again and shadows moved — Freeman
As the moon through the ice-flower stared and roved,
And that unyielding Shadow came again.
That Shadow came again unseen and caught
The children as they sat listening in vain,
Their starved hearts failing ere the Shadow removed.
And when the new morn stepped from the same cold East
They lay unawakening in the barren light,
Their song and their imaginations bright,
Their pains and fears and all bewilderment ceased. . . .
While the brief sun gave
New beauty to the death-flower of the frost,
And pigeons in the frore air swooped and tossed,
And glad eyes were more glad, and grave less grave.

There is not pity enough in heaven or earth,
There is not love enough, if children die
Like famished birds—oh, less mercifully.
A great wrong's done when such as these go forth
Into the starless dark, broken and bruised,
With mind and sweet affection all confused,
And horror closing round them as they go.
There is not pity enough!

And I have made, children, these verses for you,
Lasting a little longer than your breath,
Because I have been haunted with your death:
So men are driven to things they hate to do.
Jesus, forgive us all our happiness,
As Thou dost blot out all our miseries.

John Freeman

HAPPY IS ENGLAND NOW

There is not anything more wonderful
Than a great people moving towards the deep
Of an unguessed and unfeared future; nor
Is aught so dear of all held dear before
As the new passion stirring in their veins
When the destroying Dragon wakes from sleep.

Happy is England now, as never yet!
And though the sorrows of the slow days fret
Her faithfullest children, grief itself is proud.
Ev'n the warm beauty of this spring and summer
That turns to bitterness turns then to gladness
Since for this England the beloved ones died.

Happy is England in the brave that die
For wrongs not hers and wrongs so sternly hers;
Happy in those that give, give, and endure
The pain that never the new years may cure;
Happy in all her dark woods, green fields, towns,
Her hills and rivers and her chafing sea.

What'er was dear before is dearer now.
There's not a bird singing upon his bough
But sings the sweeter in our English ears:
There's not a nobleness of heart, hand, brain
But shines the purer; happiest is England now
In those that fight, and watch with pride and tears.

JOHN DRINKWATER

MAY GARDEN

John Drinkwater

A shower of green gems on my apple tree
  This first morning of May
Has fallen out of the night, to be
  Herald of holiday—
Bright gems of green that, fallen there,
Seem fixed and glowing on the air.

Until a flutter of blackbird wings
  Shakes and makes the boughs alive,
And the gems are now no frozen things,
  But apple-green buds to thrive
On sap of my May garden, how well
The green September globes will tell.

Also my pear tree has its buds,
  But they are silver-yellow,
Like autumn meadows when the floods
  Are silver under willow,
And here shall long and shapely pears
Be gathered while the autumn wears.

And there are sixty daffodils
  Beneath my wall. . . .
And jealousy it is that kills
  This world when all
The spring's behaviour here is spent
To make the world magnificent

Black in the summer night my Cotswold hill
Aslant my window sleeps, beneath a sky
Deep as the bedded violets that fill
March woods with dusky passion. As I lie
Abed between cool walls I watch the host
Of the slow stars lit over Gloucester plain,
And drowsily the habit of these most
Beloved of English lands moves in my brain,
While silence holds dominion of the dark,
Save when the foxes from the spinneys bark.

I see the valleys in their morning mist
Wreathed under limpid hills in moving light,
Happy with many a yeoman melodist:
I see the little roads of twinkling white
Busy with fieldward teams and market gear
Of rosy men, cloth-gaitered, who can tell
The many-minded changes of the year,
Who know why crops and kine fare ill or well;
I see the sun persuade the mist away,
Till town and stead are shining to the day.

I see the wagons move along the rows
Of ripe and summer-breathing clover-flower,
I see the lissom husbandman who knows
Deep in his heart the beauty of his power,
As, lithely pitched, the full-heaped fork bids on
The harvest home. I hear the rickyard fill
With gossip as in generations gone,
While wagon follows wagon from the hill.
I think how, when our seasons all are sealed,
Shall come the unchanging harvest from the field.

I see the barns and comely manors planned
  By men who somehow moved in comely thought,
Who, with a simple shippon to their hand,
  As men upon some godlike business wrought;
I see the little cottages that keep
  Their beauty still where since Plantagenet
Have come the shepherds happily to sleep,
  Finding the loaves and cups of cider set;
I see the twisted shepherds, brown and old,
Driving at dusk their glimmering sheep to fold.

And now the valleys that upon the sun
  Broke from their opal veils, are veiled again,
And the last light upon the wolds is done,
  And silence falls on flock and fields and men;
And black upon the night I watch my hill,
  And the stars shine, and there an owly wing
Brushes the night, and all again is still,
  And, from this land of worship that I sing,
I turn to sleep, content that from my sires
I draw the blood of England's midmost shires.

John Drinkwater

John Drinkwater

THE COTSWOLD FARMERS

Sometimes the ghosts forgotten go
Along the hill-top way,
And with long scythes of silver mow
Meadows of moonlit hay,
Until the cocks of Cotswold crow
The coming of the day.

There's Tony Turkletob who died
When he could drink no more,
And Uncle Heritage, the pride
Of eighteen-twenty-four,
And Ebenezer Barleytide,
And others half a score.

They fold in phantom pens, and plough
Furrows without a share,
And one will milk a faery cow,
And one will stare and stare,
And whistle ghostly tunes that now
Are not sung anywhere.

The moon goes down on Oakridge lea,
The other world's astir,
The Cotswold Farmers silently
Go back to sepulchre,
The sleeping watchdogs wake, and see
No ghostly harvester.

RECIPROCITY

John Drinkwater

I do not think that skies and meadows are
Moral, or that the fixture of a star
Comes of a quiet spirit, or that trees
Have wisdom in their windless silences.
Yet these are things invested in my mood
With constancy, and peace, and fortitude,
That in my troubled season I can cry
Upon the wide composure of the sky,
And envy fields, and wish that I might be
As little daunted as a star or tree.

John
Drinkwater

BIRTHRIGHT

Lord Rameses of Egypt sighed
  Because a summer evening passed ;
And little Ariadne cried
  That summer fancy fell at last
To dust ; and young Verona died
  When beauty's hour was overcast.

Theirs was the bitterness we know
  Because the clouds of hawthorn keep
So short a state, and kisses go
  To tombs unfathomably deep,
While Rameses and Romeo
  And little Ariadne sleep.

OLTON POOLS

John Drinkwater

Now June walks on the waters,
And the cuckoo's last enchantment
Passes from Olton pools.

Now dawn comes to my window
Breathing midsummer roses,
And scythes are wet with dew.

Is it not strange for ever
That, bowered in this wonder,
Man keeps a jealous heart? . . .

That June and the June waters,
And birds and dawn-lit roses,
Are gospels in the wind,

Fading upon the deserts,
Poor pilgrim revelations? . . .
Hist . . . over Olton pools!

WALTER DE LA MARE

THE SCRIBE

Walter de la Mare

What lovely things
Thy hand hath made,
The smooth-plumed bird
In its emerald shade,
The seed of the grass,
The speck of stone
Which the wayfaring ant
Stirs, and hastes on!

Though I should sit
By some tarn in Thy hills,
Using its ink
As the spirit wills
To write of Earth's wonders,
Its live willed things,
Flit would the ages
On soundless wings
Ere unto Z
My pen drew nigh,
Leviathan told,
And the honey-fly:
And still would remain
My wit to try—
My worn reeds broken,
The dark tarn dry,
All words forgotten—
Thou, Lord, and I.

Walter de la Mare

THE REMONSTRANCE

I was at peace until you came
And set a careless mind aflame;
I lived in quiet; cold, content;
All longing in safe banishment,
Until your ghostly lips and eyes
Made wisdom unwise.

Naught was in me to tempt your feet
To seek a lodging. Quite forgot
Lay the sweet solitude we two
In childhood used to wander through;
Time's cold had closed my heart about,
And shut you out.

Well, and what then? . . . O vision grave,
Take all the little all I have!
Strip me of what in voiceless thought
Life's kept of life, unhoped, unsought!—
Reverie and dream that memory must
Hide deep in dust!

This only I say: Though cold and bare
The haunted house you have chosen to share,
Still 'neath its walls the moonbeam goes
And trembles on the untended rose;
Still o'er its broken roof-tree rise
The starry arches of the skies;
And 'neath your lightest word shall be
The thunder of an ebbing sea.

THE GHOST

Walter de la Mare

'Who knocks?' 'I, who was beautiful
Beyond all dreams to restore,
I from the roots of the dark thorn am hither,
And knock on the door.'

'Who speaks?' 'I—once was my speech
Sweet as the bird's on the air,
When echo lurks by the waters to heed;
'Tis I speak thee fair.'

'Dark is the hour!' 'Aye, and cold.'
'Lone is my house.' 'Ah, but mine?'
'Sight, touch, lips, eyes gleamed in vain.'
'Long dead these to thine.'

Silence. Still faint on the porch
Brake the flames of the stars.
In gloom groped a hope-wearied hand
Over keys, bolts, and bars.

A face peered. All the grey night
In chaos of vacancy shone;
Nought but vast sorrow was there—
The sweet cheat gone.

Walter de la Mare

THE FOOL RINGS HIS BELLS

Come, Death, I'd have a word with thee;
And thou, poor Innocency;
And Love—a lad with broken wing;
And Pity, too:
The Fool shall sing to you,
As Fools will sing.

Aye, music hath small sense.
And a time's soon told,
And Earth is old,
And my poor wits are dense;
Yet I have secrets,—dark, my dear,
To breathe you all: Come near.
And lest some hideous listener tells,
I'll ring the bells.'

They're all at war!
Yes, yes, their bodies go
'Neath burning sun and icy star
To chaunted songs of woe,
Dragging cold cannon through a mire
Of rain and blood and spouting fire,
The new moon glinting hard on eyes
Wide with insanities!

Hush! . . . I use words
I hardly know the meaning of;
And the mute birds
Are glancing at Love
From out their shade of leaf and flower,
Trembling at treacheries
Which even in noonday cower.

Heed, heed not what I said
Of frenzied hosts of men,
More fools than I,
On envy, hatred fed,
Who kill, and die—
Spake I not plainly, then ?
Yet Pity whispered, ' Why ? '

Thou silly thing, off to thy daisies go.
Mine was not news for child to know,
And Death—no ears hath. He hath supped where
creep
Eyeless worms in hush of sleep ;
Yet, when he smiles, the hand he draws
Athwart his grinning jaws—
Faintly the thin bones rattle and . . . there, there,
Hearken how my bells in the air
Drive away care ! . . .

Nay, but a dream I had
Of a world all mad.
Not simple happy mad like me,
Who am mad like an empty scene
Of water and willow tree,
Where the wind hath been ;
But that foul Satan-mad,
Who rots in his own head,
And counts the dead,
Not honest one—and two—
But for the ghosts they were,
Brave, faithful, true,
When, head in air,
In Earth's clear green and blue
Heaven they did share
With Beauty who bade them there. . . .

Walter de la Mare

There, now!—Death goes—
Mayhap I have wearied him.
Aye, and the light doth dim,
And asleep's the rose,
And tired Innocence
In dreams is hence. . . .
Come, Love, my lad,
Nodding that drowsy head,
'Tis time thy prayers were said.

WILLIAM H. DAVIES

THE WHITE CASCADE

William H. Davies

What happy mortal sees that mountain now,
The white cascade that's shining on its brow;

The white cascade that's both a bird and star,
That has a ten-mile voice and shines as far?

Though I may never leave this land again,
Yet every spring my mind must cross the main

To hear and see that water-bird and star
That on the mountain sings, and shines so far.

William H. Davies

EASTER

What exultations in my mind,
From the love-bite of this Easter wind !
My head thrown back, my face doth shine
Like yonder Sun's, but warmer mine.
A butterfly—from who knows where—
Comes with a stagger through the air,
And, lying down, doth ope and close
His wings, as babies work their toes :
Perhaps he thinks of pressing tight
Into his wings a little light !
And many a bird hops in between
The leaves he dreams of, long and green,
And sings for nipple-buds that show
Where the full-breasted leaves must grow.

RAPTURES

William H. Davies

Sing for the sun your lyric, lark,
  Of twice ten thousand notes ;
Sing for the moon, you nightingales,
  Whose light shall kiss your throats ;
Sing, sparrows, for the soft warm rain,
  To wet your feathers through ;
And when a rainbow's in the sky,
  Sing you, cuckoo—Cuckoo !

Sing for your five blue eggs, fond thrush,
  By many a leaf concealed ;
You starlings, wrens, and blackbirds, sing
  In every wood and field :
While I, who fail to give my love
  Long raptures twice as fine,
Will for her beauty breathe this one—
  A sigh, that's more divine.

William H. Davies

COWSLIPS AND LARKS

I hear it said yon land is poor,
In spite of those rich cowslips there—
And all the singing larks it shoots
To heaven from the cowslips' roots.
But I, with eyes that beauty find,
And music ever in my mind,
Feed my thoughts well upon that grass
Which starves the horse, the ox, and ass.
So here I stand, two miles to come
To Shapwick and my ten-days-home,
Taking my summer's joy, although
The distant clouds are dark and low,
And comes a storm that, fierce and strong,
Has brought the Mendip hills along:
Those hills that when the light is there
Are many a sunny mile from here.

GORDON BOTTOMLEY

ATLANTIS

Gordon Bottomley

What poets sang in Atlantis ? Who can tell
The epics of Atlantis or their names ?
The sea hath its own murmurs, and sounds not
The secrets of its silences beneath,
And knows not any cadences enfolded
When the last bubbles of Atlantis broke
Among the quieting of its heaving floor.

O, years and tides and leagues and all their billows
Can alter not man's knowledge of men's hearts—
While trees and rocks and clouds include our being
We know the epics of Atlantis still :
A hero gave himself to lesser men,
Who first misunderstood and murdered him,
And then misunderstood and worshipped him ;
A woman was lovely and men fought for her,
Towns burnt for her, and men put men in bondage,
But she put lengthier bondage on them all ;
A wanderer toiled among all the isles
That fleck this turning star of shifting sea,
Or lonely purgatories of the mind,
In longing for his home or his lost love.

Poetry is founded on the hearts of men :
Though in Nirvana or the Heavenly courts
The principle of beauty shall persist,
Its body of poetry, as the body of man,
Is but a terrene form, a terrene use,
That swifter being will not loiter with ;
And, when mankind is dead and the world cold,
Poetry's immortality will pass.

Gordon Bottomley

NEW YEAR'S EVE, 1913

O, Cartmel bells ring soft to-night,
And Cartmel bells ring clear,
But I lie far away to-night,
Listening with my dear;

Listening in a frosty land
Where all the bells are still
And the small-windowed bell-towers stand
Dark under heath and hill.

I thought that, with each dying year,
As long as life should last
The bells of Cartmel I should hear
Ring out an aged past:

The plunging, mingling sounds increase
Darkness's depth and height,
The hollow valley gains more peace
And ancientness to-night:

The loveliness, the fruitfulness,
The power of life lived there
Return, revive, more closely press
Upon that midnight air.

But many deaths have place in men
Before they come to die;
Joys must be used and spent, and then
Abandoned and passed by.

Earth is not ours ; no cherished space
Can hold us from life's flow,
That bears us thither and thence by ways
We knew not we should go.

Gordon Bottomley

O, Cartmel bells ring loud, ring clear,
Through midnight deep and hoar,
A year new-born, and I shall hear
The Cartmel bells no more.

Gordon Bottomley

IN MEMORIAM, A. M. W.

September 1910

(*For a Solemn Music*)

Out of a silence
The voice of music speaks.

When words have no more power,
When tears can tell no more,
The heart of all regret
Is uttered by a falling wave
Of melody.

No more, no more
The voice that gathered us
Shall hush us with deep joy ;
But in this hush,
Out of its silence,
In the awaking of music,
It shall return.

For music can renew
Its gladness and communion,
Until we also sink,
Where sinks the voice of music,
Into a silence.

MAURICE BARING

IN MEMORIAM, A. H.

Maurice Baring

(*Auberon Herbert, Captain Lord Lucas, R.F.C. killed November* 3, 1916)

Νωμᾶται δ'ἐν ἀτρυγέτῳ χάει

The wind had blown away the rain
That all day long had soaked the level plain.
Against the horizon's fiery wrack,
The sheds loomed black.
And higher, in their tumultuous concourse met,
The streaming clouds, shot-riddled banners, wet
With the flickering storm,
Drifted and smouldered, warm
With flashes sent
From the lower firmament.
And they concealed—
They only here and there through rifts revealed
A hidden sanctuary of fire and light,
A city of chrysolite.

We looked and laughed and wondered, and I said:
That orange sea, those oriflammes outspread
Were like the fanciful imaginings
That the young painter flings
Upon the canvas bold,
Such as the sage and the old
Make mock at, saying it could never be;
And you assented also, laughingly.
I wondered what they meant,
That flaming firmament,
Those clouds so grey so gold, so wet so warm,
So much of glory and so much of storm,
The end of the world, or the end
Of the war—remoter still to me and you, my friend.

Maurice Baring

Alas! it meant not this, it meant not that:
It meant that now the last time you and I
Should look at the golden sky,
And the dark fields large and flat,
And smell the evening weather,
And laugh and talk and wonder both together.

The last, last time. We nevermore should meet
In France or London street,
Or fields of home. The desolated space
Of life shall nevermore
Be what it was before.
No one shall take your place.
No other face
Can fill that empty frame.
There is no answer when we call your name.
We cannot hear your step upon the stair.
We turn to speak and find a vacant chair.
Something is broken which we cannot mend.
God has done more than take away a friend
In taking you; for all that we have left
Is bruised and irremediably bereft.
There is none like you. Yet not that alone
Do we bemoan;
But this; that you were greater than the rest,
And better than the best.

O liberal heart fast-rooted to the soil,
O lover of ancient freedom and proud toil,
Friend of the gipsies and all wandering song,
The forest's nursling and the favoured child
Of woodlands wild—
O brother to the birds and all things free,
Captain of liberty!

Deep in your heart the restless seed was sown ; Maurice
The vagrant spirit fretted in your feet ; Baring
We wondered could you tarry long,
And brook for long the cramping street,
Or would you one day sail for shores unknown,
And shake from you the dust of towns, and spurn
The crowded market-place—and not return ?
You found a sterner guide ;
You heard the guns. Then, to their distant fire,
Your dreams were laid aside ;
And on that day, you cast your heart's desire
Upon a burning pyre ;
You gave your service to the exalted need,
Until at last from bondage freed,
At liberty to serve as you loved best,
You chose the noblest way. God did the rest.

So when the spring of the world shall shrive our
stain,
After the winter of war,
When the poor world awakes to peace once more,
After such night of ravage and of rain,
You shall not come again.
You shall not come to taste the old spring weather,
To gallop through the soft untrampled heather,
To bathe and bake your body on the grass.
We shall be there, alas !
But not with you. When Spring shall wake the
earth,
And quicken the scarred fields to the new birth,
Our grief shall grow. For what can Spring renew
More fiercely for us than the need of you ?

That night I dreamt they sent for me and said
That you were missing, ' missing, missing—dead ' :

Maurice Baring

I cried when in the morning I awoke,
And all the world seemed shrouded in a cloak;
But when I saw the sun,
And knew another day had just begun,
I brushed the dream away, and quite forgot
The nightmare's ugly blot.
So was the dream forgot. The dream came true.
Before the night I knew
That you had flown away into the air
For ever. Then I cheated my despair.
I said
That you were safe—or wounded—but not dead.
Alas! I knew
Which was the false and true.

And after days of watching, days of lead,
There came the certain news that you were dead.
You had died fighting, fighting against odds,
Such as in war the gods
Æthereal dared when all the world was young;
Such fighting as blind Homer never sung,
Nor Hector nor Achilles never knew,
High in the empty blue.
High, high, above the clouds, against the setting sun,
The fight was fought, and your great task was done.

Of all your brave adventures this the last
The bravest was and best;
Meet ending to a long embattled past,
This swift, triumphant, fatal quest,
Crowned with the wreath that never perisheth,
And diadem of honourable death;

Swift Death aflame with offering supreme
And mighty sacrifice,
More than all mortal dream ;
A soaring death, and near to Heaven's gate ;
Beneath the very walls of Paradise.
Surely with soul elate,
You heard the destined bullet as you flew,
And surely your prophetic spirit knew
That you had well deserved that shining fate.

Maurice Baring

Here is no waste,
No burning Might-have-been,
No bitter after-taste,
None to censure, none to screen,
Nothing awry, nor anything misspent ;
Only content, content beyond content,
Which hath not any room for betterment.

God, Who had made you valiant, strong and swift,
And maimed you with a bullet long ago,
And cleft your riotous ardour with a rift,
And checked your youth's tumultuous overflow,
Gave back your youth to you,
And packed in moments rare and few
Achievements manifold
And happiness untold,
And bade you spring to Death as to a bride,
In manhood's ripeness, power and pride,
And on your sandals the strong wings of youth.
He let you leave a name
To shine on the entablatures of truth,
For ever :
To sound for ever in answering halls of fame.

Maurice Baring

For you soared onwards to that world which rags
Of clouds, like tattered flags,
Concealed ; you reached the walls of chrysolite,
The mansions white ;
And losing all, you gained the civic crown
Of that eternal town,
Wherein you passed a rightful citizen
Of the bright commonwealth ablaze beyond our ken.

Surely you found companions meet for you
In that high place ;
You met there face to face
Those you had never known, but whom you knew :
Knights of the Table Round,
And all the very brave, the very true,
With chivalry crowned ;
The captains rare,
Courteous and brave beyond our human air ;
Those who had loved and suffered overmuch,
Now free from the world's touch.
And with them were the friends of yesterday,
Who went before and pointed you the way ;
And in that place of freshness, light and rest,
Where Lancelot and Tristram vigil keep
Over their King's long sleep,
Surely they made a place for you,
Their long-expected guest,
Among the chosen few,
And welcomed you, their brother and their friend,
To that companionship which hath no end.

And in the portals of the sacred hall
You hear the trumpet's call,

At dawn upon the silvery battlement, Maurice
Re-echo through the deep Baring
And bid the sons of God to rise from sleep,
And with a shout to hail
The sunrise on the city of the Grail:
The music that proud Lucifer in Hell
Missed more than all the joys that he forwent.
You hear the solemn bell
At vespers, when the oriflammes are furled;
And then you know that somewhere in the world,
That shines far-off beneath you like a gem,
They think of you, and when you think of them
You know that they will wipe away their tears,
And cast aside their fears;
That they will have it so,
And in no otherwise;
That it is well with them because they know,
With faithful eyes,
Fixed forward and turned upwards to the skies,
That it is well with you,
Among the chosen few,
Among the very brave, the very true.

HERBERT ASQUITH

THE VOLUNTEER

Herbert Asquith

Here lies the clerk who half his life had spent
Toiling at ledgers in a city grey,
Thinking that so his days would drift away
With no lance broken in life's tournament:
Yet ever 'twixt the books and his bright eyes
The gleaming eagles of the legions came,
And horsemen, charging under phantom skies,
Went thundering past beneath the oriflamme.

And now those waiting dreams are satisfied;
From twilight to the halls of dawn he went;
His lance is broken; but he lies content
With that high hour, in which he lived and died.
And falling thus, he wants no recompense,
Who found his battle in the last resort;
Nor needs he any hearse to bear him hence,
Who goes to join the men of Agincourt.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(These lists, which include poetical works only, are in some cases incomplete)

W. J. TURNER		
The Hunter and Other Poems	Sidgwick & Jackson	1916
JAMES STEPHENS		
Insurrections	Maunsel	1909
The Hill of Vision	,,	1912
Songs from the Clay	Macmillan	1915
Adventures of Seumas Beg	,,	1915
Green Branches	Maunsel	1916
J. C. SQUIRE		
Steps to Parnassus	Latimer	1913
The Three Hills	,,	1913
The Survival of the Fittest	Geo. Allen & Unwin	1916
Twelve Poems	Morland Press	1916
Tricks of the Trade	Martin Secker	1917
The Lily of Malud	,, ,,	1917
SIEGFRIED SASSOON		
The Old Huntsman	Heinemann	1917
ROBERT NICHOLS		
Invocation	Elkin Mathews	1915
Ardours and Endurances	Chatto & Windus	1917
HAROLD MONRO		
Judas	Sampson Low	1908
Before Dawn	Constable	1911
Children of Love	Poetry Bookshop	1914
Strange Meetings	,, ,,	1917

JOHN MASEFIELD

Salt Water Ballads	Grant Richards	1902
	and Elkin Mathews	1913
Ballads (*out of print*)	Elkin Mathews	1903
Ballads and Poems	,, ,,	1910
The Everlasting Mercy	Sidgwick & Jackson	1911
The Widow in the Bye-Street	,, ,,	1912
The Daffodil Fields	Heinemann	1913
Dauber	,,	1913
Philip the King	,,	1914
Sonnets and Poems	The Author	1916
Lollingdon Downs	Heinemann	1917

RALPH HODGSON

Poems	Macmillan	1917

ROBERT GRAVES

Over the Brazier	Poetry Bookshop	1916
Fairies and Fusiliers	Heinemann	1917

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

Stonefolds	Elkin Mathews	1907
Akra the Slave	,, ,,	1910
Daily Bread	,, ,,	1910
Fires	,, ,,	1913
Borderlands	,, ,,	1914
Thoroughfares	,, ,,	1914
Battle	,, ,,	1915
Friends	,, ,,	1916
Livelihood	Macmillan	1917
Collected Poems	New York: Macmillan Co.	1917
Whin	Macmillan	1918
Contributions to *An Annual of New Poetry*	Constable	1917

JOHN FREEMAN

Twenty Poems	Gay & Hancock	1909
Fifty Poems (New Edition)	Selwyn & Blount	1916
Stone Trees and Other Poems	,, ,,	1916
Presage of Victory	,, ,,	1916

JOHN DRINKWATER

Poems of Men and Hours	David Nutt	1911
Cophetua (*One Act Play*)	,, ,,	1911
Poems of Love and Earth	,, ,,	1912
Cromwell, and Other Poems	,, ,,	1913
Rebellion (*Play*)	,, ,,	1914
The Storm (*One Act Play*)	The Author	1915
Swords and Ploughshares	Sidgwick & Jackson	1915
Olton Pools	,, ,,	1916
Pawns (*Plays*)	,, ,,	1917
Tides	Beaumont Press	1917
,, (with additional poems)	Sidgwick & Jackson	1917
Contributions to *An Annual of New Poetry*	Constable	1917

WALTER DE LA MARE

Songs of Childhood (New Edition)	Longmans	1916
Poems	Murray	1906
The Listeners	Constable	1912
A Child's Day	,,	1912
Peacock Pie	,,	1913
Poems	,,	1917

WILLIAM H. DAVIES		
The Soul's Destroyer	Alston Rivers	1906
New Poems	Elkin Mathews	1907
Nature Poems	A. C. Fifield	1908
Farewell to Poesy	,, ,,	1910
Songs of Joy	,, ,,	1911
Foliage	Elkin Mathews	1913
The Bird of Paradise	Methuen	1914
Child Lovers	A. C. Fifield	1916
Collected Poems	,, ,,	1916
Contributions to *An Annual of New Poetry*	Constable	1917
GORDON BOTTOMLEY		
The Crier by Night (*Play*) (Out of print)	Unicorn Press	1902
Midsummer Eve (*One Act Pastoral*)	Peartree Press	1905
The Riding to Lithend (*One Act Play*)	,, ,,	1909
The Gate of Smaragdus	Elkin Mathews	1904
Chambers of Imagery I	,, ,,	1907
Chambers of Imagery II	,, ,,	1912
Vision of Giorgione T. B. Mosher, Portland, Maine, U.S.A.	,, ,,	1910
Collected Plays (*In preparation*)	Constable	
Contributions to *An Annual of New Poetry*	,,	1917
MAURICE BARING		
The Black Prince	John Lane	1902
Gaston de Foix	Grant Richards	1903
Mahasena	Simpkin	1905
Desiderio	Blackwell	1907
Collected Poems	John Lane	1911
HERBERT ASQUITH		
The Volunteer and Other Poems	Sidgwick & Jackson	1915

Printed by Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ld., London and Aylesbury.

Georgian Poetry

1911–1912

Edited by E. M.

Pp. 197. TENTH THOUSAND. Brown Boards.

Price 4s. net (postage 4d.)

Georgian Poetry

1913–1915

Edited by E. M.

Pp. 244. NINTH THOUSAND. Blue Boards.

Price 5s. net (postage 5d.)

CHAPBOOKS

THE OLD SHIPS

By JAMES ELROY FLECKER. *Second Thousand.* 1s. net.

SPRING MORNING

By FRANCES CORNFORD. (Woodcuts by G. RAVERAT.) *Second Thousand.* 1s. net.

STRANGE MEETINGS

By HAROLD MONRO. *Second Thousand.* 1s. net.

THE FARMER'S BRIDE

By CHARLOTTE MEW. *Second Impression.* 1s. net.

SINGSONGS OF THE WAR

By MAURICE HEWLETT. *Second Thousand.* 6d. net.

CHILDREN OF LOVE

By HAROLD MONRO. *Third Thousand.* 6d. net.

SONGS

By EDWARD SHANKS. *Second Edition.* 6d. net.

THE CONTEMPLATIVE QUARRY

By ANNA WICKHAM. 6d. net.

ANTWERP

By FORD MADOX HUEFFER. (Decorated by WYNDHAM LEWIS.) 3d. net.

Postage on each item, 1d.

RHYME SHEETS

Rhyme Sheet 3. POEMS by WILLIAM BLAKE. Plain. Price 1d.

" " 4. 'OVERHEARD ON A SALT-MARSH,' etc. (HAROLD MONRO.) *Second Impression.* Price 2d. coloured. 1d. plain.

" " 5. 'ARABIA.' (WALTER DE LA MARE.) Coloured. Price 2d.

" " 6. 'BEAUTIFUL MEALS.' (Poems and decorations by T. STURGE MOORE.) Price 2d. coloured. 1d. plain.

" " 7. 'A CHRISTMAS LEGEND.' By FRANK SIDGWICK. Price 2d. coloured. 1d. plain.

" " 8. 'THE CITY.' By JOHN DRINKWATER. (Decorations by C. LOVAT FRASER.) Coloured. Price 3d.

(Postage up to 4 items, 1d.)

Other Sheets in preparation.

A COLLECTION OF NURSERY RHYMES

With 100 Decorations by C. LOVAT FRASER. *Second Thousand.* 1s. net, or bound in Paper Boards, 1s. 6d. net (postage 1d.).

THE
POETRY BOOKSHOP

was founded in 1912 with the object of establishing a practical relation between poetry and the public.

READINGS OF POETRY

are given every Thursday at 6 o'clock, except during July, August, and September.

The charge for admission to Readings is at present Threepence for each person, or Ten and Sixpence for fifty tickets. A programme is issued every month, which can be obtained at the Bookshop, or will be sent by post to any address at a charge of Sixpence a year. Single copies will be sent by post on receipt of one penny stamp.

The FOLLOWING LISTS will be sent on application:—

A List of some of the Principal Volumes of Modern Poetry stocked by the Poetry Bookshop.

A List of Books on Subjects connected with the Technique, History, and Criticism of Poetry.

A List of Poetry Bookshop Publications.

DETAILED INFORMATION about Modern Poetry will be sent on request.

Although only Poetry, the Drama, and books connected with these subjects are kept in stock, publications of other kinds can be promptly obtained.

Address:

35 DEVONSHIRE STREET, THEOBALDS ROAD, LONDON, W.C.1.

PROPRIETOR: HAROLD MONRO.